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## Abbreviations

B.S.I.P.	British Solomon Islands Protectorate
D.O.	District Officer
G.E.I.C.	Gilbert & Ellice Islands Colony
O.R.	Australian Naval Station Reports on Outrages
R.xxx	Microfilm reel number e.g., R.671
S.S.E.M.	South Seas Evangelical Mission
W.P.A.	Western Pacific Archive
W.P.H.C.	Western Pacific High Commission

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Figure 1.1. Frontispiece to Clifford Collinson's *Life and Laughter 'Midst the Cannibals* (1926), captioned 'The author with a whilom cannibal chieftain'.

## Introduction

### Enter Tulagi *The Seat of Male Government*

[I] had a notion that I should like to have a look at the far-famed South Sea Islands.

"Which?" said he. "There are quite a lot of them scattered around you know!"

"Oh, I don't know!" I replied; "I'm not particular."

"Well look here," he said, "I happen to be a Government official in the Solomon islands, and I'm sailing to-morrow. How about coming along and staying with me for a while?"

- Clifford Collinson (1926:13-14).

Some time around 1919, jack-of-all-trades Clifford Collinson arrived in the harbour at Tulagi, capital of the British Solomon Islands

Protectorate.<sup>1</sup> He remembered sailing into a postcard vision:

The sun, a disc of copper was sinking behind Savo Island, and the piled-up clouds were painted a flaming orange, whilst a strange greeny-blue radiance flooded the horizon on either side. The sea was glass-calm and mirrored the glowing sunset, and, as we rounded a small islet, the palms with their delicate fronds were etched black against the vivid skies. Across the opal sea there floated a native canoe (1926:20).

There is something rousing about beginning with a little romance or adventure. Something convincing too – the anthropologist telling an arrival story stakes a claim to the authority of having truly 'been there' (Geertz 1988, cf. Crapanzano 1987).

Perhaps that means I need find other means of establishing my ethnographic authority. For I never arrived at Tulagi. It was destroyed in World War II, during the battles between allied and Japanese forces. It was a young capital, built shortly after naturalist Charles Morris

Woodford arrived in 1896 as the recently inaugurated Protectorate's first Resident Commissioner. The decision to proclaim a protectorate over the islands – differentiated from formal colonial annexation – had been made amidst Colonial Office grumbles about cost, and really spurred only by the reputed lawlessness of European island inhabitants plus looming French and German encroachment (Bennett 1987). In the decades immediately preceding the declaration, the Fiji-based Western Pacific High Commission (W.P.H.C.) had exerted a weak mandate over British subjects in the Solomons, deploying seasonal Australian Naval Station patrols. Established in 1877, the High Commission has bequeathed a substantial archive – this was the field into which I entered. Beginning in 1880 with the earliest records, my focus extends through to 1940, on the eve of Pacific war and subsequent political ruptures.

The colonial South Seas titillatingly promised adventure (Thomas and Eves 1999), and the Solomon Islands were nestled into this discursive geography. Collinson's remembrances from residence in the Solomons were published in 1926 as *Life and Laughter 'Midst the Cannibals*, full of adventurous vignettes which slot into the masculinist Pacific literary tradition exemplified by authors such as Robert Louis Stevenson and Jack London (Edmond 1997). Located in Melanesia, however, the islands were equated with peril, violence and death, unlike the romantically imagined, sexually free, Polynesian paradises (Edmond 1997, Jolly 1997, Wallace 2003). London certainly remembered the Solomons without the glowing praise of a tourist idyll (Edmond 1997, Labor 1962). The islands demolished his dreams. At Malaita, illness forced him to abandon his ambitious Pacific sailing plans for

five weeks in a private hospital, where he had an operation for not one fistula but two. His hands got worse; horny

skin continued to peel off. His toenails also became infected, growing as thick as their length in twenty-four hours, no matter how often they were trimmed (Grove Day, foreword in London 1994:xxii).

Labor (1962) reports London's evocations of islands 'hot, putrid, and malign' (p.151), in which 'the Melanesian god is the Prince of Blackness himself, and his myrmidons are the cannibalistic natives' (p.152). The Solomon Islands were not at all the jewel in the crown.

The various European men who arrived in the islands had their own reasons for being there. Some of them seemingly had great affection for the smattering of Melanesian isles; for example, Jack Barley served over twenty years as a District Officer, establishing close connections with local people even amidst his superiors' concerns he might 'go native' (Chapter Five). Others, like Collinson, fell into them, the islands suddenly appearing as destinations in unplanned roaming. Still others landed resignedly, like some of the staffers despatched there by the Colonial Office (MacQuarrie 1946). Some, like the Reverend John F. Goldie (Luxton 1955), went to preach, convert and reform. Different categories of colonialist held distinct agendas, employed separate stereotypes (Thomas 1994), and could variously agree or diverge. Drawing from archival materials directly produced by the colonial government, my arguments concentrate on the thoughts and opinions of its officials. They were not, of course, necessarily unified (Chapters Three and Four) nor did they behave consistently over the years (Chapter Five and Conclusion).

Island veterans like Collinson and Hector MacQuarrie (the subject of Chapter Three) committed anecdote-packed memoirs to print, capitalising upon the reading public's appetite for South Sea narratives, no doubt to their own financial benefit (Eves 1999, Grimble 1957, Thomas and Eves 1999). Perhaps they were also dreamily enamoured of

joining the league of colonial adventuring heroes – populated by men like T.E. Lawrence and Richard Burton.

Destined to remain small fry as adventurers go, Collinson is also subordinated in my account. Although he did strike up an enduring friendship with a District Officer, Collinson was decidedly freelance. My introductory deployment of him is twofold. In comparison to the archival materials forming my ethnographic data, travelogues specifically evoke locale, giving a tiny window to a sensory experience I cannot otherwise replicate. Furthermore, Collinson points to my study's central theme, the relationship of white men and native men. I turn to an elaboration of this, before moving on to the form my research took and my mode of archival reading.

Ever the enthusiastic tourist, Collinson captured snapshot images of his experience. The frontispiece to his book (Fig. 1.1.) shows him posing with a man described as 'a whilom cannibal chieftain', who reappears in a later photograph aggressively brandishing a spear and shield. Juxtaposing the two images visually reinforces Collinson's sustained textual representations of his own racial superiority<sup>2</sup> and manliness.<sup>3</sup> By himself, the 'cannibal chieftain' is an impressively vigorous warrior. Next to Collinson, he is short and wiry, physically dwarfed by the broad and muscular white-clad European. His apparently tensed body contrasts with Collinson's 'at ease' stance. It is an image very much in 'lords of humankind' (Kiernan 1972) mode. The depiction is of an idealised relationship between white man and native man, not just through its projection of hierarchical difference, but also through the very fact that they are posed together.

Such a relationship, white agent of empire and subjugated native, *both male*, forms the interrogative core of this study. The arch-colonialist

Richard Burton (n.d. [1853]), narrating his *Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah*, wrote that it was men and men who met in the desert. So it was also in the Solomons.

Perusing the Protectorate's archival records, I read the words of European *men*. Words spoken, thought, translated and transcribed by them. Inked in typescript or longhand, these words refracted the experiences of the colonial Solomons through a lens white and masculine.

This did not simply constitute the colonial gaze, flavouring the archive in ways that I could neatly discursively analyse; it colluded in the very construction of the colonial world of the Solomons. Fundamentally, the Protectorate administration privileged masculinity. It did so through interest in, focus upon, and relations with, native men as targets of administration and discourse. Emphasis was specifically upon developing and maintaining a male-centred mode of sustained colonial encounter.

A simple explanation for this might turn to gender hierarchy, noting that patriarchally conditioned European male colonialists ascribed natural leadership in colonially encountered societies to men (Powers 2000, Smith 2005). But this, I contend, was not the only reason, nor is it the most analytically fruitful line of inquiry.

I suggest that the colonial male encounter comes under the rubric of homosociality. Originally a sociological term used to denote close same-sex relationships of a non-erotic nature, the concept was extensively developed in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1985) analysis of canonical English literature. Directly influenced by the work of both Rene Girard and Gayle Rubin, and drawing upon the psychoanalytic traditions of Lacan and Irigaray, Sedgwick posits a triangular structure with two men vying for the affections of one woman. She argues that in



rivalry the male-male relationship inevitably becomes stronger than the male-female; it becomes homosocial.

Approaching homosociality from an anthropological rather than literary framework, I adapt it to both a specifically colonial reading and a purportedly empiricist archive. Homosociality here usefully transpires as a critical means of (disruptively) examining masculinity since it encompasses diverse male relationships without imposing a familial paradigm (as do fraternity and paternalism, concepts which I consider too inflexible to represent a broad range of responses). Additionally, Sedgwick's elaboration does re-enable 'queer' potentialities, leaving homoeroticism an open question and challenging hegemonic masculinity's heteronormative foundations (Chapter Five and Conclusion).

Women, in Sedgwick's triangle, are a necessary mediating requirement for male relationships, an implication similar to Connell's (1995) description of masculinity as needing femininity for its own existence - as what male identity is enacted in relation to. My rendering, however, challenges this feminine placement. I argue that the Protectorate's maintenance of homosociality subordinated cross-gender contact, if not attempted to wholly exclude women.<sup>4</sup>

Native women were discursively consigned to one of two categories - either passive male property; or, as antagonists of men. The passive woman rates not a mention, unless placed into victim role. Aggrieved through sexual assault, or, more commonly, loss of a relative or child, she could be permitted to appear before the court to narrate the unfortunate happening; relayed through a male translator and dispassionately transcribed by a white male typist. The second category, the trouble-making woman, appeared as the vamp enticing native men

into adultery (Chapter Four), or malignantly speaking emasculating curses (Chapter Three).<sup>5</sup>

Male primacy has previously led to the feminist reconfiguration of colonial archives as sites of the uncovering and resurrection of women, an approach advocated, for example, by Antoinette Burton (2004). While this has been a valid and productive endeavour, we need not, I think, feel compelled by a sense of feminist duty to reinstate the absent woman when faced with masculine archives. Rather, my contention is that an anti-patriarchal engagement can equally be made by viewing masculinity as worthy of scrutiny *in itself* (see also Sinha 1999); a project that simultaneously seeks to interrogate the invisible normative status of masculinity. Here, again, homosociality makes this critical approach possible. Schmidt (1990), in a paper on marriage law in Zimbabwe during a period contemporaneous to this study, argues that British administrators and local patriarchs collaborated towards controlling African women's sexuality. She posits the patriarchal suppression of women's rights as the ultimate intention. I strongly agree that men collaborated in ways exclusionary to female voices. However, the phenomenon of colonial homosociality warrants a sustained examination rather than being immediately labelled as an obvious implement of patriarchal subjugation.

In her triangle, Sedgwick argues that the antagonistic "I hate him" is a displacement of the truer emotion of "I love him". I see the precipitation of homosociality not in the potential violence of rivalry, but in the *actual* violence of the years immediately preceding the establishment of the Protectorate (Chapter Two). I further argue that it manifested in a particular unequal form inflected by race. Hema Chari (2001) similarly applies homosociality to an analysis of colonial India, and also diverges from Sedgwick's triangulation. She remarks that

Sedgwick does little to address the ability of race to split male identities, despite Victorian literature's noted concerns with the imperial project. In line with imperialism elsewhere, Thomas (1992) affirms that much was made of racial difference in the Solomons. Race provided a 'but' point – natives were men, *but* they were not *white* men. Subordinated, the native was to be tamed and controlled; that is, ultimately beholden to the administration.

My concentration only on European men means that I cannot comment on native male views of homosociality. Consequently, I read homosociality as a creation of colonialist men; the (attempted) realisation of their own masculine dreams of empire.

Amplifying this introductory discussion, Chapter One concentrates on scholarly approaches to violence, race and masculinity. I outline and draw these together to provide my theoretical background.

In Chapter Two I consider the 'outrages' from 1880-1895, that is, the incidents of native violence against white men, and subsequent naval reprisals dominant immediately prior to the Protectorate's declaration. My reading situates them as what Mbembe (2001) would call the founding violence of direct colonial rule in the Solomons. Importantly, this was a violence that founded not only rule, but *homosocial* rule. The 'outrages' became an originating point for colonialist understandings and representations of natives; and I read the period's violent confrontations providing impetus for homosociality's later development in the Protectorate.

The 'outrage' retribution model's dominance in dealing with native (male) violence was superseded by a bureaucratic judicial system, as I describe in Chapter Three. Judicial developments announced a change from representations of generic native actions to interrogations

of *individual* native actions. As contentious cases demonstrate, however, colonialist perceptions on the most appropriate ways to deal with native legal infractions were multiple and divisive. Judiciary records show homosociality coalescing as the standard model of Protectorate governance, along with debates on how best to enact it.

Continuing the legal theme, in Chapter Four I narrate three phases of work upon native adultery legislation, beginning in the 1920s, by which point homosociality was well entrenched. An examination of the administrative near-obsession with adultery regulations introduces a process of demonising native women (and in particular, their sexuality), clearly indicating a preferential emphasis upon native men.

Moving from native women to European women, Chapter Five continues the subject of female exclusion. Further highlighting white masculinity itself, I interrogate the ways in which it was constituted in the Protectorate, and, importantly, debated and disrupted. Masculine behavioural norms were policed and white men who violated acceptable standards, losing restraint and tipping over the edge, invited vigorous censure.

Targeted for particular condemnation was the explicit conversion of acceptable homosociality into *unacceptable* homoeroticism. My Conclusion draws from queer theory (in which Sedgwick is considered formative) to address the lingering question of the homoerotic in Protectorate colonialism. I furthermore consider the place of research on alternative sexualities in anthropology.

My treatment of the Protectorate government throughout is as a discrete colonial culture. Importantly, this was not static, with changes and continuities during the period. For example, I particularly identify a gradual shift towards an increasingly systematic and nuanced administrative routine, while, simultaneously, tropes of the treacherous

savage remained persistently available. Rather than linear description, my historiographical sensibilities lie with discerning such integrated elements.

As an anthropological engagement, this project emerges from the growing disciplinary affirmation of sustained forays into the past, most recently chronicled by Axel (2002). Historical anthropology has necessitated the constitution of the archive as a valid site of ethnographic fieldwork (Dirks 2002). Unlike Collinson's romantic cruise, my appearance in the field was the uninspiring event of entering the temperature controlled reading room of Special Collections at the University of Auckland Library. The Western Pacific Archive (W.P.A.) was acquired by the University in 2002, and, spanning over 1500 feet of shelf space (FCO Historians 2002), contains a number of collections from the region. The W.P.H.C. collection, pertinent to the Solomon Islands, contains the Commission's officially recorded correspondence with the administrative heads of the various British territories under its jurisdiction.<sup>6</sup> The records are maintained on a combination of microfilm reels and as loose paper in original filing folders, usually scrawled with official minutes<sup>7</sup> and in varying states of preservation.

The archive is situated firmly within the wider machinations of the colonial state, as much in its documentary compulsion (Richards 1992) as its operation within the Pacific territories. Richards understands the Victorian archive as a utopian endeavour enthusiastically insistent that *all* knowledge could be gathered and stored:

The archive was not a building nor even a collection of texts but the collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern, a virtual focal point for the

heterogeneous local knowledges of metropole and empire (Richards 1992:104).

The great gathering of knowledge was positioned as a necessity upon which the state staked its success as an imperial power.

But everything is *not* knowable, and so dreams of encapsulating all things within one colossal archival entity fell into ruin (Richards 1992). Regardless, the data-hungry ideals of this early information age fed into state enlistment. For example, much colonial knowledge of subjugated populations fits under the rubric of state ethnography, a nineteenth-century development which reflects 'the shift of state anxiety from the political and juridical to the social and cultural' (Dirks 2002:61). The Protectorate debate over adultery legislation is exemplary – information was gathered for a specific, state-defined purpose, analysed in this pursuit, and deployed towards its effect (Chapter Four). Colonialist understandings of Solomon Islanders were simultaneously fractured and generalising. Jack Barley, for example, was considered by successive Resident Commissioners to possess an extensive knowledge of 'the natives'. This qualification required a lumping of multiple cultural complexes into a singular 'Solomon Island culture', which was not only unified but able to be known. Barley was the Protectorate's version of the 'archival superman' (Richards 1992), the man in whom a vast array of knowledge was collected in state service. Yet concurrently, and for variant purposes, native homogeneity could be dismantled into regional, island, or tribal groups. Such characterisations strongly appeared in the 1930s when the District Officers of Ysabel and the Eastern Solomons propounded a view of native custom at variance with dominant Malaita-centred discourse (Chapter Four). State ethnography, then, was fundamentally manipulable, and the archival state was not a disinterested entity, nor did it furnish holistic or objective accounts.

Consequently, I hold that the archival materials primarily provide a commentary on *colonialist* discursive constructions and negotiations. This is not to say that documentary information, ethnographic or otherwise, is necessarily false, but rather acknowledges the conditions of the era in which it was created. The nineteenth century ethnological assertion that all native women in the Solomons were prostitutes (Elton 1888), for instance, reflects European sexual norms to a far greater extent than it provides any reliable ethnographic data. Similarly, in Ann Laura Stoler's corpus on the Dutch Indies (e.g., 1995, 2002) colonial commentaries on the *inlandsche kinderen*<sup>8</sup> ultimately reflected back on the Dutch themselves as they negotiated national, imperial, and racial identities. Taking inspiration from Stoler's approach, my work is framed as a critical ethnography, turning the masculine archival lens back upon itself through readings which seek to derive discursive traces that perhaps their authors never intended to divulge.

Colonialist men were informants with a twist. I encountered them only in the written traces of only small parts of their lives; through freehand jottings, whizzing by on a microfilm reel, or in fading triplicate copies of official memos. This is research therefore built out of fragments and ambiguities. Perhaps this is no more so than 'traditional' ethnography, but simply made visible to a greater extent by the frustration of archival documents being *all* there can be. Ethnography in-the-flesh also tends to have the benefit of recounting stories structured by beginning, middle, and end, whereas the archive refuses such neat conformity. Fragments are the norm and whole stories the exception. My analysis arises from brief and incomplete glimpses of the colonialists' Solomons. However these glimpses were carefully preserved, signposting moments where the attention of the administration lingered upon something – a person,

an issue, an event. This care and interest must be read as significant and meaning-laden.

Of course, differing personalities and opinions inflect the documents, making each specifically authored rather than a generic archival product. My proceeding chapters acknowledge authorial individuality, where possible indicating the writer's background and circumstances. But this also sits alongside an understanding of the archive as to some degree a coherent body of work, reflecting a colonial culture. The texts are indeed individualised, but they also form a substantial collection.

London's *South Sea Tales*, published after his 1907 expedition, introduce the 'inevitable white man':

A man needs only to be careful – and lucky – to live a long time in the Solomons; but he must also be of the right sort. He must have the hallmark of the inevitable white man stamped upon his soul .... a certain grand carelessness of odds, a certain colossal self-satisfaction, and a racial egotism that convinces him that one white is better than a thousand niggers<sup>9</sup> every day in the week, and that on Sunday he is able to clean out two thousand niggers .... [He] must not merely despise the lesser breeds and think a lot of himself; he must also fail to be too long on imagination. He must not understand too well the instincts, customs, and mental processes of the blacks, the yellows, and the browns; for it is not in such fashion that the white race has tramped its royal road around the world (1994:200-201).

Inevitability, in London's impression, is an individual attribute, linked to a conceptualisation of brute masculinity, of action over thought. Its sense of disillusionment segues into the ruination of the base camp in *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad 1999 [1899]). In Conrad's African jungle, the brick maker does not make bricks, equipment is dumped and decaying,



the boat is at the bottom of the river, yet white men retain powers of life and death over natives.

Both accounts belong to the contemporary critique of colonialism. Since the decline of formal empire, awareness of its adverse impacts has increased and much colonial (often racist) discourse has been academically debunked (e.g., Said 2003 [1978]). Anthropologists classically adhere to cultural relativist dictates against prejudicially judging their subjects of study. As an anthropologist examining colonialism from the colonialist perspective I face a tension between vociferous postcolonial criticism and non-judgmental methodologies. Speaking from residence in Aotearoa/New Zealand, a colonially constituted Pacific nation politically fraught with the ramifications of indigenous renaissance and restitution, exacerbates this. I know that the intentions of Protectorate colonialists were rarely deliberately malevolent – they were products of the time. Yet, I still find it difficult to put aside judgment and cynicism. The point of this moment of reflexivity is not to excuse myself, but rather to highlight the difficulties that occur in writing ethnographically about colonialism. Other anthropologists, such as Stoler (1995), Thomas (1994) and Taussig (1987, 1993) write of colonialism from a critical ethnographic perspective; while their intention is certainly not to vilify, nor is it to remain aloofly objective. I consider this a fair stance for engagement with the manifestations of imperial power, and situate my own work in such a tradition. It is also a deeply personal interrogative position. My awareness is one in which colonial history is very much a part of my *own* history, as a descendant of colonial migrants, and, as part of a discipline tracing its origins to imperial encounters (Pels 1997). I do not envisage myself as obligated to assume direct responsibility for past deeds, but

both my anthropological and antipodean senses of self demand my personal connection and response.

The descriptive terms applied to people, categories and institutions in the colonial situation can often be contentious, and Cooper and Stoler (1989) underscore the need for scholars of colonialism to draw attention to the ways in which colonial regimes built up binaries without themselves falling into them. My choice of terms has been guided by my focus upon colonialist texts. Because I have both drawn my data from their words, and concentrate my analysis on those same words, I have in the majority of cases followed their usage, evoking what Malinowski might have termed 'the native point of view'. This should be viewed as not reinforcing such usage but rather indicating colonialist understandings of the peoples with whom they came into contact, and the descriptive choices made to create and bolster these understandings.

I use the term 'colonialists' to denote the European agents of empire in the Pacific. I use this specific form rather than 'colonist' or 'coloniser' simply because the alternatives imply a form of settler society that never occurred in the Solomons. Colonialists, mainly hailing from Britain and Australia, generally considered themselves Europeans, which usage I follow. 'White' crept into archived parlance around the 1920s. While I often allow it to sit interchangeably with 'European', I also draw upon its current deployments in critical scholarship on race (e.g., Young 1995, Dyer 1997, Taylor 2005).

'Natives' was the contemporary descriptor for the indigenous inhabitants of the Solomon Islands (as it was also for populations throughout the empire). While neutral as a term in itself, it has acquired many cultural and political loadings as a product of colonial era thinking. In line with my critical ethnographic perspective, I use the

term to highlight my emphasis upon colonialist representations, while remaining cognisant of its implications.

Administrative documents apply terms such as ‘tribe’ and ‘chief’ to the island inhabitants in a far less reflective or specific way than would current anthropology. However, as the only way to test terminological applicability would be through an ethnographic analysis beyond the scope of this study, I have followed colonialist usage. Further, I follow the geographical designations of the period, such as the district of Ysabel rather than the modern Santa Isabel. In some cases I have had to collapse myriad spellings (during the 1880s these could even vary from person to person) into one hold-all (see also Jackson 1978). Where possible, however, I have tried to include modern names in parentheses.

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Henceforth variously, “the Protectorate”, “the government” or “the administration”.

<sup>2</sup> For example, anecdotes where native servants demonstrate their ignorance or simplicity to comic effect are common.

<sup>3</sup> Collinson lives his ‘boyish dreaming’ (1926:ix) with appropriately masculine activities like shooting at crocodiles and tinkering with boat engines.

<sup>4</sup> See also Chari 2001, for an argument regarding the segregation of colonised women from colonised men in India. Her deployment of Sedgwick’s homosociality, like my own, focuses on the ‘between men’ rather than the role of women.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Rodman (2003) has also worked in the Western Pacific Archive, although directing her efforts towards the New Hebrides. Her approach to native women, and hence to the possibilities of the archive, is substantially different from my own.

<sup>6</sup> This includes the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and the Gilbert & Ellice Islands Colony (Kiribati and Tuvalu).

<sup>7</sup> Minutes constitute the more informal side of discussion on an issue or case, and are closest in approximation to modern-day email ‘trails’, as multiple staff members add their opinions.

<sup>8</sup> Simplistically, the offspring of perceived inter-racial unions.

<sup>9</sup> London was an American author. I have *very* rarely encountered this term as a referent to Solomon Islanders in the archive.

## Chapter One

### **His Majesty's Pleasure** *Colonial Masculinity, Violence and Desire*

From a general examination of the accused I am of the opinion that he is probably not sixteen years of age. The examination of the sexual organ shows that only one testicle has descended and the amount of pubic hair is very slight.

... I do not think an examination of the teeth would have any particular value in fixing the point as to whether he is under sixteen.

I am definitely of the opinion that he is under sixteen.

- Edward George Sayers of the Medical Mission Hospital at Bilua gives evidence in the Teri case, April 1930 (1704/30).

In 1930 an adolescent named Teri admitted murdering his young lover on the island of Ranonga in the New Georgia group. She may have been pregnant with his child – he certainly believed that she was. Witnesses identified him as compelling her to follow him into the bush from which she never again re-emerged, but at his trial Teri argued that she demanded sex and taunted him when he refused her. In anger he lashed out and struck her, delivering lethal blows to her head. Panicked, he dragged the body into a hole and fled. Villagers discovered her corpse a few days later. They smelt the stench first - in the tropical climate, rot set in quickly (MacQuarrie 1946).

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1930, Judicial Commissioner Ragnar Hyne found Teri guilty of murder. Referencing the medical report (quoted above) which indicated Teri's genital/masculine underdevelopment, Hyne declared him legally a child, and therefore exempt from the adult sentence of the death penalty. Teri was sentenced to indefinite detention, and spent the next three years confined as a youth prisoner at

the Tulagi Gaol, before being transferred to the custody of the Seventh Day Adventist Mission for a carpentry apprenticeship. In 1938 it was reported that he had 'misconducted himself' with a mission girl. Although this was considered gravely immoral, he repented and the government considered that he would likely marry her upon his release, effected in September of the same year (1704/30).

The colonial state was not with Teri as he beat one lover to death, nor as he 'misconducted himself' with another. But through the court case and subsequent eight custodial years, monitoring and interrogating his actions, it entered into vicarious participation. Central to my argument (see, particularly, Chapter Three) is my reading of the colonial state's adeptness at appropriating physical occurrences and metamorphosing them into ideational forms. Through this dimension, race and masculinity laced state interpretation of the Teri case. Teri's lack of masculinity was attributed by physical examination of his genital development. Neither his sexuality nor virility, derived through engagement with a woman, was allowed to counter this. The medicalised white male gaze at Teri's testicles trumped his own evidence that 'I started to have connection with her about eighteen months ago ... I have often had connection with her' (1704/30). Declared a child, he avoided the noose. Labelled a native in need of salvation, he was freighted off to the mission. Despite his later incrimination, his release was approved in part because his immorality could be dissipated through heterosexual marriage.

I suggest that in archival cases like this, official actions, and various recorded correspondence, the colonial state's foundational concerns can be read. This chapter constitutes my initial thematic mapping. Here, I consider anthropological understandings of sexuality and masculinity in combination with a wider literature in colonial

studies, delineating an analytical framework productive not of a magical formula with which to comprehensively understand every aspect of colonialist life in the Solomons, but rather of an explorative trajectory.

The anthropology of colonialism is a growing field (Pels 1997). Indeed, the full implication of Eric Wolf's (1997 [1982]) work on centuries of sustained cross-cultural contact is that *all* anthropology must at some point engage with colonialism. Many ethnographic studies have indeed proceeded in such a fashion, considering colonial impacts upon encountered populations (e.g., Ferguson 1990, Keesing 1992, Knauft 1994). However, mirroring anthropology's originating concern with the non-Western 'exotic' (Fabian 1983), fewer studies have appeared which examine in-depth those doing the colonising. Paul Rabinow urged almost twenty years ago:

We need to anthropologize the west: show how exotic its constitution of reality has been ... make [this] seem as historically peculiar as possible; show how [western] claims to truth are linked to social practices and have hence become effective forces in the social world (1987:241).

Surely, such a call leads in the direction of ethnographic engagement with colonial cultures. Doing so demands considering colonial discourses with a mix of ethnography and nuanced historical research. Precisely this undertaking has been made by Clay (2005), Jolly (1997), Stoler (1995), Thomas and Eves (1999), for example. I follow their approach in situating myself, as an anthropologist, within this developing and potential-filled field.

Nicholas Thomas (1994) and Jean and John Comaroff (1992) have persuasively argued that scholars of colonial cultures must consider them as historically specific; fragmented and conflicted rather than coherent and unified. Indeed, Thomas argues for the plural *colonialisms*

as a more apt term. Conversely, Herman claims that disparity and pluralism posed no problem to the creation of a dominant colonial discourse, and that, consequently, 'the argument for complexity should not be used as a smokescreen to avoid confronting the overall power of colonial discourse in imperial practice' (1999:398). Colonial empires dominated a significant portion of the globe and often used the same cluster of discursive tropes – like race and civilisation – in doing so; and the ramifications of such a disposition of power were, and remain, massively far-reaching (Fanon 1970 [1961]). However, the deployments of colonialism were *not* everywhere the same and cannot be collapsed into a generic mode, and so Herman's argument can best be read as a qualification to that of Thomas.

Local circumstances substantially impacted upon the nature and extent of colonial governance. Perry describes the colonial administration of British Columbia endeavouring to impose metropolitan institutional models, rather than administer local custom, but ultimately thwarted by an inability to deliver on promises and exert control. The struggle to manifest a monolithic colonialism resulted in a negotiation of local specificities. She concludes that:

the fragile, hybrid, and forever disappointing character of the state in British Columbia bears witness to the significance of the local in creating the imperial and, ultimately, in challenging it (2005:160).

Thus, while conscious that empire expanded as part of a wider discursive, administrative and cultural complex, it remains vital to consider each colonial situation as a differentiated specificity.

In imperial terms, the Solomons were tiny, marginal and remote. The British had not had any particular desire to possess these islands since they promised nothing but trouble – loss of life in pacification, white men 'going troppo', comparatively poor economic potential, and a

drain on treasury funds (Bennett 1987). The Protectorate therefore had to be self-sufficient, and pressures to generate enough revenue to pay administrators' salaries led to state-supported land alienation (Bennett 1987). Much of this land was devoted to copra<sup>1</sup> production, an industry run by a small European planter community. However, as a protectorate rather than an annexed colony, and as tropical islands considered climatically inhospitable to European bodies, there were no plans for colonising the Solomons.

In these ways, the Protectorate was on its own. Yet, it remained a part of empire; netted by colonial discourse regardless of its size or significance. The government received generic colonial circulars telling of events throughout the empire, they prepared 'blue books' and annual reports for the Colonial Office, and they thought of themselves as officers in imperial service (Keesing and Corris 1980, MacQuarrie 1946). This mixture of imperial connection and backwater status raises critical questions regarding the increasing academic commonplace of a two-way traffic model between colony and metropole (Cooper and Stoler 1989, Levine 2003, McClintock 1995, Wallace 2003). Colonialism in the Solomons would not be socially formative 'at home' in England. What it instead formed was its own distinctive colonial culture.

Thomas (1994, see also Stoler 2002) provides the 'colonial project' as an alternative to the idea of a single coherent and unified colonial discourse. These were neither wholly discursive nor wholly practical, and 'more often projected than realised' (Thomas 1994:106). The concept allows for the power relationships engendered by colonialism, while working with its divergences, multiplicity, and particularities. Keesing and Corris's (1980) portrayal of the colonial Solomons as a 'world in miniature' is prior to Thomas' notion of a project, but nevertheless captures the concept by situating the Protectorate at the periphery of



empire and evoking its tiny European ruling class. The fragmentation of the colonial project is borne out by the agreements and disagreements, fractures and shifting territories of the Protectorate's diverse European population. The 'world in miniature' was an exercise in infinitesimal colonial bureaucracy, a development of its own conditions as well as an outpost of a greater empire.

The years 1880-1940 were part of an era notably marked by formulations of racial hierarchy, especially driven by the scientific representations surrounding social Darwinism and eugenics (Brantlinger 2003, Jahoda 1999, Stocking 1982 [1968]). The colonial other was explicitly viewed as a racial other. In the discourse of racial biology, European superiority was considered proven (Jahoda 1999, Pieterse 1992, Stocking 1982). Colonised bodies were prodded, probed and displayed to demonstrate their consignment to the position of evolutionary straggler. European eyes could linger upon the exposed buttocks of Saartje Baartman, the 'Hottentot Venus', and see in their curves a monstrosity that proved the distance of her otherness; the evidential fruit of their voyeurism cycling back to intensify their very power to look (Gilman 1985). Natives, in nineteenth-century racist science, were other; so other that their shaded faces, drawn to emphasise their affinity with the apes from whom they had purportedly travelled not so many footsteps on the evolutionary traverse, could be inked onto the bottom rungs of a Great Chain of Being that also had the possessors of fine white features in triumphant vantage at the top (Jahoda 1999, Pieterse 1992).

Evolutionary formulations drew connections between lower racial orders and animality. For the colonial state operating in such discursive climes, Mbembe argues:

[t]o *command* an animal ... was to play the game of attempting to get him/her out of the encirclement while being fully aware that the circle was never thereby reduced, since grooming and domestication occurred almost always in the animal's own domestic drives (2001:27).

The ascription of animality prohibited the native from being anything else, even amidst the vaunted colonial civilising mission.

Clearly, racist articulations went beyond discourse and into lived experience (Fanon 1970, Weismantel 2001). These experiences were as lived for the Europeans imposing discursive hierarchies, as much as for those subjugated by them. Their textual traces have appeared in colonial archives throughout the era (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, Stoler 1995), and the W.P.H.C. collection is no different.

Initially, I set out to chronicle the confluences of race and sexuality in the racist discourse of miscegenation, a discourse canonically cemented by the plotlines of colonial fiction (Edmond 1997, Thomas and Eves 1999) as well as the analyses of current anthropology (Caplan 2001, Stoler 1995, 1997, Weismantel 2001). Here, analytical attention has particularly focussed upon desire between the colonialist 'self' and subjugated 'other' (Young 1995). The very entry of the colonialist to imperial territory has been read in erotic terms. Said's classic study, for example, indicates the novelist Flaubert's fixations upon an Orient suggestive of 'untiring sensuality, unlimited desire' (2003:188). Hyam (1990) has written of empire as the export of sexuality, and, a corresponding import of exotic fantasies is also evident in the unabashed trade in orientalist erotica (Schick 1999).

These whirling desires could also be dark and threatening (Levine 2003), particularly in the spectre of miscegenation. The word 'miscegenation' was coined in 1864 (Young 1995), aligning it with the

period of high empire. Indeed, the desperate need to maintain racial purity was a persistent colonial motif (Stoler 1995). Racial hierarchy was concerned to preserve white superiority, constituting inter-racial copulation as a boundary-crossing act, the threat of which was precisely that mingling bodies would become racially indistinguishable. This could culminate not just in the sullied integrity of the civilised self, but in miscegenated offspring. Discourses of degeneracy, often eugenicist, claimed that children born of unions with 'savages' would imbue tendencies to atavism (Jahoda 1999, Stoler 1995, Young 1995). Thus, they would not be white, could not be white ... but in the vivid image of a portion of white blood mixing with a portion of native blood, the proponents of European superiority found abhorrence and danger.

In face of these threatening visions, sex with the other became a vice. The severe representations of the horrors of disease and degeneration that would ensue from the act, however, neither curbed nor prevented its occurrence. Levine (2003) and Robert (2001) argue that, like alcohol or gambling, this vice could still be given a social place since masculine ideals encouraged (hetero) sexual expression, figuring a perceived need to consummate desire, which Halle (2004) calls the 'heterocoital imperative'. Levine traces state attempts to control prostitution and venereal disease in the empire; attempts that were always underwritten by a fundamental belief in the necessity of the provision of prostitution, required, through the hegemonic figuring of masculinity, to sate the virile appetites of colonialist manhood. Men were placed as active agents for whose desires women were to be provided; 'normal' manhood measured through an appetite for the sexual domination of women.

Consequently, an interpretive space has developed allowing numerous scholars to draw comparison between desire-fuelled

possession of the native body and colonial territorial possession. McClintock envisages a discursively and metaphorically gendered colonialism, whereby a feminised colonial world is penetrated by dominant white male energy in 'an erotics of ravishment' (1995:22). Andrea Smith (2005) polemically invokes a rape metaphor to describe European treatment of Native American nations. Mbembe (2001) includes an unexpectedly phallogocentric passage that runs through a list of clever crudities to posit a copulation metaphor for the colonial relationship. My sense of this metaphorical device is that it is deployed too readily and uncritically. The image of male/phallic penetration of the colonies, while conveniently Freudian and temptingly racy, only serves to reinforce and normalise *both* a hierarchical gender binary and heterosexuality (see also Schick 1999).

Analytical feminisation of the colonial other and normalised heterosexuality serve to make same-gender relationships, like homosociality, invisible. Indeed, my own concentration upon homosociality occurred only when I did not unearth traces of miscegenation hysteria in the archive. Failure in this respect opened avenues that I would not otherwise have seen, enabling my distinctive re-reading.

Historian K.B. Jackson (1978) chronicles the interaction between colonialists and Solomon Islanders up to 1925 in a thesis entitled *Tie Hokara, Tie Vaka*, which he translates as Black Man, White Man.<sup>2</sup> Despite the obviously gendered reference made in the title, he bypasses masculinity itself, demonstrating just how taken for granted it has previously been. Indeed, the appearance of in-depth academic studies of masculinity has considerably lagged behind the flowering of studies of femininity and women's lives triggered by the research imperatives of

second wave feminism. R.W. Connell's *Masculinities*, considered a central text, appeared just a decade ago, in 1995, and so it is only recently that the interrogative move towards masculinity occurred.

As a late entrant to colonialism the Protectorate occupies a particularly underexamined period. Currently, much literature on historical masculinities is pointed towards *fin-de-siècle* intrigue (e.g., Alderson 1998, Showalter 1990), or biographical (e.g., Rutherford 1997, Tosh 1991). Further, such studies either predate the Protectorate, or are irrelevant to it.

The meeting of men in the Solomons was underwritten by dictates of what a man should be. Protectorate administrators adhered to a white, British, bourgeois conception of masculinity, which stood as hegemonic in empire. Connell (1995) defines hegemonic masculinity sociologically, seeing it as fundamentally concerned with legitimating patriarchy. However, Tosh's (2005) historical approach endows it with an equal interest in homosociality. While Connell is a foundational scholar in masculinity studies,<sup>3</sup> his historical readings tend to be brief and superficial, providing support for his modern analyses rather than made in themselves. Conversely, Tosh directly challenges historical researchers to critically evaluate the role of masculinity, leading by sustained example, and I consider his work to be of greater benefit to my own.

Reappraising the common anthropological usage of hegemony, Kate Crehan suggests the concept be applied

to grasp how power is lived in a given context, and how certain regimes of power – remembering that no regime is uncontested – are produced and reproduced in the day-to-day lives of individuals (2002:200).

As Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) suggest, one of the ways in which anthropologists can compare and critique power, is through studying

masculinities. Unfortunately, the discipline seems yet to make a significant contribution to such a field, and, anthropological interrogations of historical masculinities are almost non-existent. While anthropologists like Gayle Rubin were pivotal in the 1970s and 80s feminist rethink of gender (Vance 1995), particularly through cross-cultural edited volumes (e.g., Ortner and Whitehead 1981, Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974), there seems to have been no equivalent in terms of masculinity. The cross-cultural model, deployed in work like David Gilmore's, seems unfortunately to have turned more towards revelling in shared testosterone than productive theorisation. While he does conclude with the admission that his belief in a shared 'deep structure of manhood' (1990:220) had become less certain through the 'exceptions' posed by third genders, this is scant critical engagement in a work that still proceeds from long-debunked essentialist cultural understandings such as "The" Tikopia (see also Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994). Michael Herzfeld, whose endorsement appears on Gilmore's dust jacket, demonstrated little critical awareness in a preview of his ethnographic film *Monti Moments* (2006), merely attributing his concentration on men to their social primacy, bearing out Matthew Gutmann's rejoinder that 'anthropology has always involved men talking to men about men' (1997:385). Truly engaging anthropologically with masculinities requires a deeper approach.

Connections between masculinity and empire have increasingly been made by a range of scholars (Sinha 1999). Some see this linkage emerging from a desire to break away from the metropolitan insurgency of early feminism and the 'New Woman' (Middleton 2003); others as a product of real and imagined opportunities for sexual freedom in imperial territories (Aldrich 2003, Hyam 1990). Tosh (2005) argues that

it was a case of mutual reinforcement, men needing empire and the empire needing men.

With imperial excitement popularised by the representations of masculinist fiction, for some men

marriage and family was quite deliberately cast aside in favour of a bracing masculine fantasy of quest and danger, a world without petticoats (Tosh 2005:107).

Furthermore, a definite discourse identified women as intensely threatening. Sander Gilman (1985) draws connections between female sexuality, prostitution, and death in nineteenth-century western culture. The spectre of death in the figure of Zola's Nana is exemplary – the desirable woman, turned prostitute, and ultimately ravaged by smallpox. Of the prostitute Bataille says:

because she has become a stranger to the taboo without which we should not be human beings, [she] falls to the level of the beasts; she generally excites a disgust like the one most civilisations claim to feel for sows (1986 [1957]:134).

This misogynistic depiction of woman (Bataille characterised *all* women as innately prostitutes) as inhuman pig decries the threat of her sexuality. So it is with Nana that:

all of a sudden in the comely child the woman arose, disturbing, bringing the mad surge of her sex, inviting the unknown element of desire. Nana was still smiling: but it was the smile of a man-eater (Zola quoted in Gilman 1985:253).

I return to these visions of feminine horrors in Chapters Four and Five, elaborating on their role in Protectorate homosociality.

I argue that early colonial violence in the Solomons sparked and cemented later masculine homosociality. The outrage period (Chapter Two) sharply demonstrates how colonial constructions hyphenated

masculinity and violence – men-of-war were aptly named. Violence is predominantly portrayed as a malignant behaviour from which ‘decent society’ seeks to protect itself; it signifies human baseness and lack of self control (Wood 2004). Yet, coexisting with these messages, competing and equally hegemonic discourses effectively legitimate violence, making prized heterosexual masculinity dependant upon it (Breckenridge 1998, Connell 1995).

Some scholars, such as Abdul JanMohamed (1985), reduce colonial violence to a mere façade for economic subjugation. I heartily disagree.<sup>4</sup> Colonialism was violent; hellishly sickeningly violent at times (Taussig 1987). With reverberations still widely felt and wrestled with in the present day (Smith 2005) it can be tempting to simply assign blame to colonial aggressors, thereby occupying a position where the criminal has been picked out of a line-up, and duty admirably done. Violence, however, occupies such a level that it cannot be neatly delineated, carefully carved off and scientifically analysed, it is achingly grey (Agamben 2002).

Violence was a potent force available, at various times, to *all* of the parties to colonialism. Colonised and colonialists, and all the fragmented categories that made them up, could wield, manipulate and deploy violence, and in turn feel its effects upon themselves. Colonial violence was multifaceted, always cropping up in different spaces and in different ways and characterised by seepages beyond immediate confrontation. Studies by Blaskett (1990), Ferguson (1990), Wolf (1997) and others, have noted the effects of European presence on inter-tribal violence, and colonial conditions also affected violence between Europeans (McLaren 1997). Acts like Teri’s murder of his young lover, which did not cross racial or hierarchical boundaries, can also be



brought under the rubric of colonial violence in that they were drawn into a space of colonialist discursive portrayal.

Mbembe divides colonial state violence, upon which I focus, into three roughly chronological types – founding violence, legitimization, and maintenance. Founding violence underpinned the colonial conquest, while legitimization framed conversion into justified authority. This was followed by maintenance violence, which Mbembe sees as becoming entrenched to the point of banality. This last ‘played so important a role in everyday life that it ended up constituting the central cultural *imaginary* that the state shared with society’ (Mbembe 2001:25).

Destruction wrought by naval men-of-war was the foundational period of British rule in the Solomons (Chapter Two). As the state developed into a fully-fledged on-the-ground administration (Chapter Three), its violence ceased to be so immediately explicit. In his landmark ethnography, Taussig portrays the rubber plantations of the Putomayo as ‘a Hobbesian world, brutish and short, in which rites such as torturing the wild but defenceless Indians were what held the camp together’ (1987:43). Acts of horror become so normalised that the sight of a pilloried Indian would scarce divert, let alone shock. Yet maintenance could also be much more mundane. The exercise of the judicial system upon the native body, for example, could be just as much an act of violence as could extra-judicial torture.

Kelly suggests that the intangible gaze has been academically accorded more power than is warranted. He attempts to restore corporeality via the additional concept of grasp, remarking that ‘gazes don’t scar. It is grasps ... that cut and leave the deepest marks on real bodies’ (1997:95). This offers an alternative to the disembodiment tendencies of discourse analysis and further allows a connection to the very real effects of colonial violence, evoked by Taussig (1987) through

the stench of brutally lacerated flesh. Yet Taussig's ethnography of terror stretches further than either 'gaze' or 'grasp', teaching that violence does not exist merely in the aggressive moment. Conrad's (1999) Kurtz is a supreme example of the colonialist self annihilated in violent horror, and Taussig's account draws heavily from Conrad's evocative colonial writings, where colonialists swirl uncontrollably in a potentially violent vortex. Following these lines of thought clearly situates violence as an integral part of the colonial experience, embedded deep in its core. What this means, furthermore, is that violence is not here a bounded event but an extensive condition.

In consequence, the colonial state, essentially embodying violence, could flip it around and use it as a crime with which to accuse the other. The irony of 'pacification' is a case in point. Its logic is basically that the violence of the native is so reprehensible that it must be subdued – subdued through violence. Clay (2005), analysing European discourse about New Ireland at a similar time, argues that attribution of violent savagery to the native other allowed colonialists to maintain a boundary between such behaviour and their self-claimed civilisation. This, she continues, was undertaken particularly in the face of significant slippage between the two. Mbembe writes of colonial power manipulating the notion of right. Colonialists held right to be always on their side, so that 'in face of it, there could only be "wrong" and infraction' with anything contesting this labelled 'savage and outlaw' (2001:26). It was through this kind of conceptualisation that acts like colonial pacification and the punitive expeditions of the outrage period (Chapter Two) could be carried out, and, even more than this, trusted in.

Having come to colonial violence in scholarship, I turn in the next chapter to an examination of the punitive naval aggression that came to

serve as the Protectorate's founding mythology, discursively delineating white and native masculinities. I consider the 'outrages' having here established the terrain for their analysis. Rejecting analytical emphasis on heterosexual desire and the racist discourse of miscegenation, I instead conceptualise a masculinist colonialism, inaugurated by men-of-war, and carried through to the development of male homosociality. Race meant that this could not be an equal relationship, and additional chapters will elaborate its elision of women, challenging Sedgwick's triangular delineation. By the time Teri came to trial in 1930, the Protectorate's colonial culture was in full flower. The next chapter shows its first steps, rewinding back to 1880.

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Copra is made by drying the flesh of a coconut.

<sup>2</sup> This is itself a curious translation. In the Roviana language (*lingua franca* for the Methodist Mission) *tie* means 'person', without gender specificity (Dureau, personal communication).

<sup>3</sup> Masculinity studies is differentiated from men's studies, the former generally taking a critical approach, whereas the latter emerged more as an anti-feminist backlash (see Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994).

<sup>4</sup> This should not be read as a negation of the political economic realities of colonial subjugation in the Solomons. See, for example, Bennett (1987) on the role of the state in land alienation as well as plantation conditions. Instead my focus rests upon the ideational.

## Chapter Two

### Outrage in the Savage South Seas *Founding Violence 1880-1895*

... blood-thirsty savages, whose saturnalia of slaughter has now extended over so long a period ... wholesale murder has apparently been looked upon as the normal state of things that should naturally obtain in the South Seas

- Fiji Times, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1881 (R.568)

George Queen, native of Birkinhead, England, age about 40, dark complexion, full dark whiskers, black eyes, height about 5 feet 7 inches, tattooed on both arms with an anchor and supposed figure of a woman

- Description of European man believed murdered by natives in 1887 (W.P.H.C. 8 III 16)

The above description of George Queen is no eulogy. Queen and his companion Martin Madson reportedly met their deaths at native hands for the plunder of their heads and their ship. But these men were not the white-clad bearers of imperial civilisation. They were fugitives, wanted for the theft of a boat and £200 from docks at Fiji.<sup>1</sup> Painting out the boat's name, they had sailed to the ungoverned Solomons, seeking anonymity and a living trading with natives. They were last sighted by Europeans in August 1887, near Roviana in the New Georgia group, at that time one of the most notorious regions for head-hunting in the islands. By the first week of September, their deaths had been reported. Three days later, Captain Francis Clayton of *H.M.S. Diamond* located the charred remains of Queen and Madson's beached vessel. There he 'burnt the houses, destroyed four canoes, and cut down about 110 cocoanut trees, and fired three shells at their village high up the hills' (8 III 16). Criminals or otherwise, they were white men killed by natives, towards whom punishment therefore had to be directed.

Printed Outrage Reports, detailing this and other incidents, were produced from correspondence furnished by the Australian Naval Station, patrolling the Western Pacific through the 1880s and into the early Protectorate years of the 1890s. The primary archival remnants of this period, they reproduce written communication between naval captains and their superior officers – primarily Rear Admiral George Tryon and Western Pacific High Commissioner Sir John Thurston – regarding serious incidents under investigation. They were produced annually, and one investigation could stretch over a number of years' touring seasons. Cases were closed only when the navy was satisfied that either adequate punishment had been administered or declared it impossible to carry out.

The Outrage Reports build a picture which I suggest can be read as a framework for the early British administration's view of the Solomons and importantly as a reference point for later colonial representations. 'Outrage' constituted a conceptual focal point in which were entangled racialised images of a savage native nature. The Outrage period fed off a model of colonial domination as the founding violence (Mbembe 2001) of the British empire's extension into the Solomons. It instituted an imperial masculine superiority, endowed through an over-arching sense of a wider masculine empire, tied in with British-ness. Actions like Clayton's were part of a performance aimed at both native and European audiences. The text of smoking huts, smashed canoes and hacked-down coconut trees was that the white man could and would wreak punishment upon the native man. Profoundly, then, this was a masculine confrontation. Violence – on both sides – was enacted by men. Opposing sides carried the semiotic weight of racial ascriptions, barbarity and civilisation, and masculinity.

As the majority of the islands had not yet been annexed to a colonial power<sup>2</sup> they were, for white men, wild frontier lands. These were the days of tomahawks, guns, and purported cannibal feasts. The vessels of Queensland labour recruiters plied the coasts, rough-and-ready traders eked out livelihoods, and early missionary cadres made their bids for heathen souls. Intermittent naval patrols were the lone bulwark of European law and order. Without a ruling mandate, they were limited to a modicum of discipline over British subjects, and retributive punishment of severe native infractions against them. The absence of British jurisdiction meant punitive expeditions had to be launched by declaring war (Jackson 1978), as Jane Samson comments, ‘naval officers attempted to exercise an authority that was often illegal, while regarding themselves as forces of law and order’ (1998:98).

The pre-Protectorate Solomons were included in a wider region. Until 1896 the territory was overseen by the High Commissioner from Fiji, and Australian vessels undertook patrols. The Outrage Reports themselves do not focus solely on the Solomons – cases from New Guinea and the New Hebrides are mixed in as well. News clippings from the Sydney and Fiji papers, occasionally preserved when pertinent to the colonial administration, further demonstrate regional integration. What this means is that acts of violence and punishment were played out on a wider stage than the Solomons themselves.

But they were also the dark heart of the South Seas storybook. Reputedly swarming with the Western Pacific’s most bloodthirsty savages (Jackson 1978), the Solomons were endowed with a fearsome reputation ensuring that events there were read with and through their infamy. Captain Usborne-Moore of *H.M.S Dart* advised the reader of his 1883 report:

In my reports I have written of the inhabitants of these islands as "Savages". This has been done deliberately, for I believe there is no race of people to whom this epithet so justly belongs (R.571).

During September 1885, a sixty year-old mathematician by the name of Childe<sup>3</sup> arrived with a native servant on the island of Bagga-Bagga in the New Georgia group. He hoped that the tropical climate would alleviate his elephantiasis and planned to capitalise on the isolation by dedicating himself to his learned studies. But his arrival was to prove fatal rather than curative. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, when a European trader visited the island, '[h]e found the marks of blood, and the stones arranged for cooking the body' (Capt. Francis Clayton 28/86 R.574).

Patrolling naval officers investigated and pieced together what they considered the likely story of Childe's demise. Very soon after he arrived at the island, Childe's native servant abandoned him and purportedly informed the notorious head-hunters of nearby Simbo as to the presence of a lone white man in the area. The investigation concluded that the Simbo warriors had killed Childe, consumed his corpse, and incorporated his head in rituals surrounding a canoe launching.

Much of the naval explanation is speculative and stereotypical. This does not at all mean that it should be written off as false, but nor is the story strictly true. It was woven out of multiple threads – the testimony of a trader keen to gain and defend a lucrative foothold; statements taken from competing tribes, with their own feuds and agendas; the report of the naval captain leading the investigation; and the higher officers of empire to whom reports were made, and who in turn made their own assessments. Furthermore, explanatory possibilities were significantly influenced by a European discursive

tropology constituting the Solomon Islanders as head-hunters and cannibals. The emergent story was therefore a product that reflected a melange of what was known and what was believed about the area's inhabitants. As Comaroff and Comaroff comment on a newspaper article with pretensions to ethnography, it 'told less of the [subjects] than of the culture that had conjured them up as its inverted self-image' (1992:4).

The naval interest in investigating outrages was not so much a desire to explain, but an imperative to see that retribution was achieved. Therefore, the purpose of enquiry was to identify a target for punishment. Naval ideals imagined a ferocious man-of-war bearing down upon culpable natives, punishing their transgressions in a display of might; *ergo* the chastised native would learn not to mess with white men. Part of the expressed rationale for punishing performances lay in the European depiction of native 'eye for an eye' mentality. As Usborne-Moore of *H.M.S Dart* submitted in 1883, 'Life for life is a law they understand' (R.571). Thurston, in 1890 outlining his desire to punish 'guilty' villages not once but *every* naval season until they bowed, referred to his plan as 'the process of impressing the minds of guilty natives by repeated operations against their villages', and explained its proposed efficacy:

If this course were followed British men-of-war would gain a reputation amongst the natives for such tenacity of purpose that outrages would become rare (8 III 18 1889).

Yet, as much as imperial dignitaries like Thurston dreamt of men-of-war cutting awe-inspiring figures upon the waves and crushing the crime out of the native, this never entirely came to fruition (Jackson 1978). In the Childe case, as hopes of apprehending the suspects faded,



even Thurston had to admit that continuing punishment would only result in harm to the innocent (R.576).

Seaborne justice was a piecemeal affair, a muddled exercise in British laws struggling to operate in an alien territory where their jurisdiction was particularly shaky. The Solomons eluded juridical control. Capturing suspects was a well nigh impossible feat, and even identifying them posed considerable difficulties. European witnesses could not provide positive identifications and, indeed, might not even be remotely reliable. For example, in the initial depositions held in inquiry into the May 1886 attack on the labour schooner *Young Dick*, one sailor was too drunk to give evidence, and another three did not even show up (1886 O.R. R.576).

The alternative practice of gathering information from nearby tribes was also far from trustworthy. A man-of-war could be manipulated, as evidenced by the statements of native seamen in the 1888 Armstrong case. Seaman Fili gave the telling ultimatum that 'If a man-of-war punished the Manoba people it would be well with us. If a man-of-war does not come, we wish to make war ourselves'. The self-interested vein was continued by Ka/Jackson, the son of a local chief, who sought to stroke naval ego into pliant service: 'My father wants you to be good-minded, and send a man-of-war to punish that place' (1889 O.R. R.581). Difficulties of language and interpretation had additionally to be negotiated. Captain Maxwell of *H.M.S Emerald* found himself waylaid in 1881 by a native guide who appeared to be telling multiple, contradictory stories that were getting the investigation nowhere. Giving up, Maxwell concluded that either the guide knew nothing, or anything of value was being lost in translation.<sup>4</sup>

Then there was the question of who exactly could be held accountable. Was it just the man who struck the fatal blow? What if

another had orchestrated the affray, the man with tomahawk in hand following in obedience? A minute on the *Elibank Castle* case file states that 'the actual murderers are of course no worse than the others, all are equally guilty' (43/86 R.574), castigating all those criminal enough to have a brown skin and live on a certain island.

Unsurprisingly, many natives fled when a man-of-war appeared in their area. The navy maintained that only the guilty parties would do so, the innocent having nothing to hide or fear (103/86 R.575), but, given the naval penchant for displays of firepower, innocence or guilt likely made little difference to self-preservation.

Native responses to naval presence connected to colonial understandings of indigenous warfare. Maxwell, reporting on Roviana in 1881 stated:

Their own hostilities consist of a system of ambush and treacherous catching of their enemies unawares and at a disadvantage ... They never think of an open attack or of any defence but dodging and flight (R.568).

Native behaviours are here implicitly contrasted with European conceptualisations of their own military tactics. The former clearly come off the ethical loser, marked with the cowardice of flight and the immorality of surprise raids (Jackson 1978). This theme recurred through the 1880s, with naval commanders expressing dismay at coming up against natives who neither stand and engage, nor occupy defensive fortifications that can be attacked.

Battle and siege were impossible, effectively hampering European punitive powers. Rough navigability of mountainous and verdant island interiors made inland settlements difficult for landing parties to penetrate. Naval guns were supposed to negate this problem, and yet to have any effect, the vessel had to manoeuvre into a suitable firing position, a feat not always possible off treacherous coasts.

Notably, punitive expeditions tended to direct punishment towards property rather than people. The navy did not engage in wholesale slaughter. Jackson (1978:98) notes that only one native was known to have died as a result of naval shelling in the New Georgia group, although he does indicate a strong probability that there *were* other deaths. Executions were infrequent, but did occasionally occur when apprehensions were made in murder cases. For example, Captain Kelham of *H.M.S Rapid* reported in 1892:

The prisoner, Sourahu ... confessed that he was one of the men who killed [trader] Mr. Dabelle ... after careful deliberation I decided to have him shot, which sentence I caused to be carried out (8 III 21).

The hanging of convicted murderers became legally mandated in the twentieth-century Solomons (Chapter Three), but it took the declaration of the Protectorate and the establishment of a bureaucratic judiciary for this to occur.

According to Samson (1998), humanitarian perspectives marked naval excursions in the Pacific in the earlier nineteenth-century, and it was only from the 1870s onwards that bombardments became acceptable. Her work concludes with the annexation of Fiji in 1877, but it seems that there was significant overlap after this. Naval fighting talk was tempered with a sort of half-genuine, half-grudging protection of the innocent, espoused by Tryon and Thurston. Tryon's sailing orders urged prudence, if not also civility:

Should it be necessary for you to inflict punishment by act of war in the islands, the justification for doing so lies in the circumstance when it exists, that the crime was committed, and which compelled you to adopt that course was not justifiable by any civilised tribunal, and was of such a nature as to demand reparation or punishment (1886 O.R. R.576).

By openly displaying their capacity for violence, in whatever form, the navy claimed to address natives in an understandable language. Since this required only capacity, and not horror, it was equally available to compassionate outlooks. Captain Maxwell of *H.M.S Emerald* explained his shelling of a village in 1881 as an endeavour undertaken 'more for the sake of the moral effect of a display of power than with any desire to harm the inhabitants' (R.568). He went on to note that these inhabitants were probably not the actual culprits anyway; regardless, discourse and the shared guilt of savagery marked them for demonstrative display.

Commanding a punitive expedition into the interior of Choiseul in 1881, Maxwell reported the following incident:

The only native seen was one poor old woman, who I suppose was not able to run away, and the wretches were too frightened or too lazy to carry her. She was found in one of the houses and was immediately, and before anyone had an idea what he was going to do, tomahawked by the Bambatana chief [who was attached to the naval party as a guide]. I deeply regret this horrid accident, and was at the time very angry; but I suppose it was only what we should have expected, being the fashion of making war among these savages. However, though badly wounded she was not killed, and Dr. Marsh tried to dress her wound for her, but she tore off the bandage he put on, and there was nothing to be done but to leave her to her friends. She was accordingly taken down and laid in a house below the village, and which was left standing to give her shelter (R.568).

A close reading of Maxwell's reportage reveals a discursive tangle. Finding the village empty, the landing party had lashed out at its skeleton of houses, smashing and burning them. Amid the destructive excitement, the notion that a discovered villager should *not* be tomahawked would have appeared incongruous to the Bambatana chief. The landing party's behaviour more likely encouraged him. Maxwell's emotional amalgam of anger, regret, and contempt seem almost out of

place. Yet he clearly imagined his comportment as civilised, contrasting with native savagery.

Foucault has argued that public punishment, embodied by the scaffold and pillory in 'emphatic affirmation of power and of its intrinsic superiority' (1991 [1975]:49), eventually changed into a nineteenth-century system of discipline and reform. Judicial focus altered from the dismembered body to the controlled mind. As he says, 'the penalty must have its most intense effects on those who have not committed crime' (p.95). His differentiation between the 'atrocious' and the 'humane' is markedly less clear in the naval expeditions which really contained elements of both. Despite the contemporary consolidation of judicial reform in the metropole, punitive expeditions tended to pay only cursory heed, and generally took free rein (Mayo 1973). The naval commanders endeavoured to avoid loss of native life. But, as the mixed messages of the Maxwell incident above demonstrate, the same commander who so wrung his hands over a tomahawk blow had absolutely no qualms with ordering the destruction of an entire village. Officials like Tryon and Thurston fretted about body-counts yet simultaneously spoke of punitive expeditions as declaring war upon the natives. It is a strange form of war that recoils at the thought of bloodied hands. I would go so far as to argue that the European attitude towards naval punishment, caught between metropolitan judicial reform and violent colonial reality, wavered constantly between concern and delight.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of 'outrage' gives the following range of meanings and usages:

1.     a. Mad, passionate, violent, or disorderly behaviour; confusion caused by over-excitement, disorder; violence of language, insolence...
2.     a. An act of violence, esp. one committed against a person or against society; a violent injury or wrong; a gross indignity or affront.  
b. Violence affecting others; violent injury or harm (sometimes *spec.* sexual assault or rape).  
c. ... gross or malicious wrong or injury done to feelings, principles ... an action or situation which provokes indignation, shock, anger ...  
d. A person of extravagant appearance or behaviour; a wild or eccentric person.
3.     a. The exceeding of established or reasonable bounds; lack of moderation, extravagance, excess, esp. of food or drink; exaggeration ...  
b. Excess of boldness or pride; foolhardiness, rashness; presumption.
4.     A violent effort or exertion of force.
5.     Fierce and overwhelming indignation, anger ... experienced in response to some injustice or affront.

In its near entirety, this definition prompts an instructive reading. What did the British mean when they labelled acts of violence by natives against Europeans as 'outrages'? The Outrage Reports phrased their subject matter as 'outrages committed against British subjects', this sense drawing from the meanings of section 2. The murders of white men by native men were indeed acts of violence which came to be painted as affronts to peace, decency and the imperial dignity of white skins. But it is thought-provoking to consider the other dimensions of meaning with which the term 'outrage' comes loaded.

Woven through the definition are lashes of compelling emotion – fierce, passionate, mad. Against this, consider the visceral evocation of ferocity in Seaman Thomas Crittenden's deposition in the 1886 *Young Dick* case. He recounts returning to the wounded and dying crew in the aftermath of the attack:

[the sailmaker] asked me to give him a drop of brandy; he was alive when the boats returned; he said something about his mother and a watch ... his left arm was cut in two, it was hanging by the flesh on the one side; the left side of his skull was lifted off the brain; his jaws were smashed and his teeth knocked in; his back was cut in pieces; the cook was cut across the forehead, his brains were running over his face (1886 O.R., R.576).

It was said that natives would turn to any white substitute in revenge for the death of a kinsman at European hands (e.g., 103/86; 1885 O.R. R.576; 354/90). Whether the loss came through murder, accident, or a death on indenture in far off Queensland, it stereotypically demanded the response of tomahawk or snider rifle. Yet facing such an evocation of irrational native demands for vengeance, the European riposte was really little different, suffused also in the desire for action and revenge. Their anger at the affront of the acts they called outrage was *itself* outrage, the shocked emotion that demanded action. Outrage was not a 'thing', a label that could be applied, but an entire experience.

The force behind the notion of outrage as effrontery lay in the brazen actions of the native who violently transcended the racial binary in which he was branded inferior. Outrages, by definition, were against white men. It is here that outrage becomes a 'gross or malicious wrong'; violence against the stipulated racial order was inherently provocative. Those who outrage by threatening the decency and order of white superiority *must* suffer retribution, must be punished, because they must be put in their place. Prior to the formal proclamation of the Protectorate, little care was given to violence by natives against natives. The exceptions were head-hunting, viewed as one of the vilest depths of barbarism yet largely, at this stage, left to missionaries to sermonise against; and, violence against native employees, treated, when reported,

as an affront to white men by proxy. The place of outrage, therefore, was one marked by race. Indeed, it was outrage *because of* race.

While head-hunting *per se* was primarily a mission province, the taking of white heads was intensely provocative. Natives were said to use white heads for ceremonial purposes, particularly for the launching of a new canoe as in the Childe case. Sometimes, the motivation for an outrage was attributed to the simple want of a head for a ritual. The fate of Howie, a victim of the 1885 *Elibank Castle* 'massacre', was put down to this reason. Clayton's report even neatly orders perceived motives by priority:

[the natives] had built a new canoe house, and according to native custom, skulls were required to hang in it. Plunder was a secondary reason, and the pleasure of a cannibal feast doubtless added weight (43/86 R.574).

Decapitation, followed by the use of one's head in native ritual, was a terrible, ignominious fate for a white man – as trader Frank Wickham lamented, 'Poor Howie's head is hung up in a Taboo House' (43/86 R.574). Expeditions up into the bush by landing parties were generally prohibited in sailing orders; the navy considering the loss of sailors' lives too much of a risk to run. But they *were* sometimes mounted for the retrieval of white heads, like 'Poor Howie's'. Retrieved heads could be deployed as 'proof' of native guilt. Clayton, aboard *H.M.S Diamond* in the 1885 season

found in a new canoe house, the skulls of two Europeans, and three natives. As I considered this an [*illegible*] proof of guilt, in addition to all the other information received I destroyed the village and canoes (43/86 R.574).

How exactly Clayton could so categorically derive racial identity from a flesh-less skull is in itself a fascinating question. Nevertheless he found his divination justification enough to impose judicial destruction.



Ascribing native motivations for taking white heads entailed the racist assumption that these were superior. Reports of a white head taken for the launch of a canoe, for example, always carry the implicit assumption that the race of the head<sup>5</sup> made it somehow ceremonially desirable. Childe's death was ascribed by Clayton's investigation to exactly this. And yet this sacred superiority was a European invention – there is no evidence that natives themselves placed a significant ritual value on white skulls (Dureau 1998). But for Europeans, it went without saying that, fundamentally, racial superiority existed even in death.<sup>6</sup> In the European imaginary, both natives and Europeans seem to have shared a notion that European skulls were of greater value. This is rather reminiscent of the trope of first contact in which European godlike presence overwhelms natives (Obeyesekere 1997).

In 1881, a Sydney newspaper lauded the actions of a naval captain who had captured and executed murder suspects, expressing delight that his actions would

exalt the English name and character in the opinions of the natives themselves [more] than any other event which has taken place of late years in these parts ... the tale will be told in many a village, by their camp fires on shore, and in their canoes at sea; and will be the theme of many of their songs, perhaps, for some time to come (R.569).<sup>7</sup>

In this figuring, the native audience would relive the performance, spreading its effect beyond the instant of punishment's administration, and thus dragged into a sort of complicity with it. Through these means, it was hoped, the behavioural effect of punishment would be magnified. The native would come to see that he was nothing compared to the white man clad in the uniform of navy, empire and justice, and his

weapons that hurtled through the air and reduced trees, houses and canoes to splinters.

But was it really just the natives for whom the performance of justice and punishment was enacted? Jackson (1978) writes that the European traders who were increasingly gaining permanent footholds in the islands found themselves dependent on native populations for both their livelihoods and their wellbeing. Disconcerted by these circumstances, 'many believed that the big guns of Her Majesty's ships would somehow reinforce their rather precarious position' (1978:70) and so clamoured for more patrols, more investigation, more punishment.

In 1886 Captain Brooke of *H.M.S Opal* hounded the killers of trader G.B. Adams, whom, he declared with disgust, immediately after their crime 'went in their canoes round the neighbouring places just to show themselves off' (1886 O.R. R.576). Clad as he was in naval stripes and white civility, Brooke could scarce imagine that the substitution of 'canoes' for 'men-of-war' might rework the description to point in his own direction. Redolent with satisfaction after doling out retributive punishment, he reported:

It must be a great blow to their reputation when their neighbours soon afterwards hear that these boasters have been compelled to flee from the white man, their town has been bombarded, and their canoes and other property destroyed (1886 O.R. R.576).

Enforcing white masculine superiority, Brooke's own boast could not be challenged. He even received a moral stamp of approval when Tryon noted that Bishop Selwyn 'said this work of *Opal* could not fail to produce a good and sufficient effect' (103/86 R.575).

While Captain Brooke and the Sydney press crowed with delight at the prospect of tales of punishment and European power being spread among the natives, what was simultaneously happening, even in their

own speech, was that tales of punishment and European might were being spread among Europeans. Upholding the racial order was in this sense not just about putting the natives in their place and ensuring their subordination.

As Jackson (1978) writes, naval punishment was largely ineffective in its stated goals of bringing offenders to justice and preventing further infractions. Neither acts of outrage nor naval visitations ceased. Concentrating on pacifying efficacy, however, misses an important point. The slick of race and masculinity in which naval punishments came coated points to much more than a concern with pacification. The arrival of a naval man-of-war was surrounded by pure performance – natives being brought on board to be threatened and given ultimatums, the boom of the guns. This performance was delicious to the performers. They were, I suggest, its ultimate audience.

Such displays were enacted and read through discourse on Britishness, manhood, and bourgeois respectability. Throughout the nineteenth century, metropolitan Britain saw changes in attitudes towards violence and crime involving all of these ideas and resulting in what Wood (2004) calls a ‘civilised mentality’ towards violence, emphasising refinement, restraint, rationality. Wood focuses on the differentiation of this ‘civilised’ bourgeois from the ‘customary’ working classes for whom violence centred upon unrestrained physical confrontation. Despite this delineation, he argues, ‘customary’ violence lurked as civility’s shadow. A strong desire for reform collided with demands for maintaining violent capacities in the service of public order:

The culture of refinement’s expectation of increased self-restraint was balanced by the delegated violence of a police force invested with the power to use “legitimate” force in

combating crime and a continuing enthusiasm for physical punishment (2004:42).

Fundamentally, this was male violence, and points to a British hegemonic masculinity marked by a restraint that simultaneously retained a capacity for physical exertion.<sup>8</sup> However, other than brief passages on the criminalisation of the Irish, Wood does not extend his project into the empire, and, indeed, explicitly limits his consideration to specifically English ideas about violence. But can there be an English mentality of violence *without* the empire? After all, scholars of colonialism have continually recognised the importance of the flow of discourse between colonies and metropole (Cooper and Stoler 1989, Levine 2003, Thomas 1994, Wallace 2003), and, demonstrated mirrored representations of the 'savage' working classes, and 'savage' colonial natives (Magubane 2004). Discipline in the empire was more outwardly violent than it was in the metropole. There was scope to treat natives, unfamiliar bodies in unfamiliar places, in ways otherwise unthought of – as Tosh notes, 'fantasies of violent reprisal which were completely inadmissible in England could be freely indulged in a colonial setting' (2005:201).

Typical orders from Tryon warned 'only to land men against the natives should it be absolutely necessary to do so to save life' (R.576). Nevertheless, landing parties, where they formed, were used punitively rather than for lifesaving. It is never entirely clear from the reports themselves exactly why the decision was made to land – captains apparently did not feel obligated to provide an explanation in submissions that overwhelmingly focussed on results over reasons. Jackson (1978) attributes Davis's particularly brutal expedition in 1891 to his disciplinarian personality. Certainly, personality had a role in colonialism, a point which appears starkly in the quirks and pathologies

of the later Protectorate's District Officers (proceeding Chapters). However, Jackson's history concerns natives rather than colonialists and, by looking at the impact and not construction of punitive expeditions, he skirts the colonial culture in which they were embedded. The intersections of naval decisions and colonial discourse provide some of the missing explanatory detail. Clayton's 1885 expedition occurred amidst alarm over the fate of European heads. He was able, by landing, to retrieve (what he declared were) the heads in question and to use this apparent discovery of prime evidence in instant judgment. Further, landing parties could burn and smash where shells could not be fired.

Against Foucault's concern with punishment, Agamben (2002) emphasises the crucial role of judgment, indeed arguing that it is the ultimate juridical end. But there can be no doubt in this context that punishment was the *sine qua non* of the exercise. Judgment was both *a priori* and *post hoc*, made on the run, almost by way of explaining what was to be done. Punishment was the naval mantra, with reports persistently ruminating upon whether sufficient punishment had been administered.

Looking shorewards near Florida (Nggela) from *H.M.S Emerald* in 1881, Captain Maxwell could see 'columns of smoke ... rising inland in many places, marking the line of march of Lieutenant Clarke and his force' (R.568). Clarke's landing party destroyed the houses and property of a village suspected of participating in the killings of the *Sandfly* boat's crew. House-burning was thoroughly symbolic. Destroying a house reduces its occupants to a state of homelessness - to a state of baseness, almost to the primitive. It is an intriguing thought that those who are already *meant* to be primitive have this condition forcibly placed upon them. The punishment enforces the representation. Fire is a motif pregnant with cultural symbolism. The fires of hell; fire as purgative;

the burning of witches and so forth make it both threatening and manipulable.

Part of the recurring rationale for house-burning in the Solomons was to make things so uncomfortable that natives would accede to demands to surrender particular named suspects. An instance occurred in the Childe case when, after the burning of their homes, the suspects fled to the bush. Initial reports portrayed an entire fugitive tribe. Either numbers then dwindled, or this portrayal was an over-inflation, because the membership was later reported by Captain Brooke as being fewer than a dozen. Or then again, perhaps Brooke deliberately underestimated, the small size allowing him to solicit the collusion of nearby chiefs while downplaying to concerned colonial authorities any risk of inter-tribal warfare (107/86 R.575).

According to Jackson:

The loss of houses and small canoes would have been a short-term annoyance rather than a serious loss. The destruction of coconut trees was more severe, as they were a source of income and took about six years to reach a fruit bearing stage ... The worst loss the islanders could suffer was the destruction of their *tomako* [canoes]: their material and spiritual investment in these vessels was enormous, and could not be replaced easily (1978:99).

This was certainly not outside of naval comprehension, with which Jackson seemingly shares the problematic notion that island houses were not really houses. In 1881 Captain Dawson of *H.M.S Miranda* wrote that:

The destruction of the village is in itself a slight punishment. The huts are of the roughest construction and the whole will probably be completely restored in the course of a few weeks (R.569).

He went on to applaud the punitive power of destroying canoes, highlighting the labour of their construction. Such destruction was undoubtedly undertaken at least partially with a view to its effect in

terms of their cultural importance. Similar motivations underwrote the 1891 Davis expedition, where a thousand skulls were removed and smashed, and which Jackson (1978) cites as the most punitively effective in the New Georgia group. Yet, as Jackson also notes, canoes were often well hidden; care was taken to secrete them before abandoning villages and this frequently secured their protection. The naval reports usually outline what was destroyed, and canoes and skulls did not predominate. If the items destroyed had been entirely determined by an emphasis on native value, then it should follow that canoes and skulls would rate much higher than they do, and much more effort would have gone into locating them. I do not think that this can be entirely put down to their successful concealment. Instead, as I have persistently argued, regardless of the actual impact of naval punishment, it was symbolically efficacious in speaking back to a bourgeois European mindset at least as much as towards natives. Burning houses administered punishment by destroying property; it enforced racial and masculine superiority; and, just maybe, setting a house alight made a naval officer feel gratified. Reading Maxwell's account, a feeling of his pride at the actions of his Lieutenant - actions allowing him to gaze with satisfaction upon the spectacle of smoke rising from the ashes of native homes - is palpable.

Beginning this chapter, I noted that outrages were confrontations between men. Such a situation is not merely a given, but constitutive. Indeed, the male confrontation of the outrage period was the initiating force for the development of homosociality under the Protectorate. Shared violence provoked white men and native men to experience one another through their capacity for physical action (Breckenridge 1998). For white men, particularly, it constituted a theatrical arena, where not only impressions and characterisations of their native counterparts were

formed, but displays of their own masculine capabilities were enabled. As founding violence, it set the scene for developments in the Protectorate. Homosociality was the most striking feature of Protectorate governance, and it is from outrage violence that it began to set and cohere.

The outrage period became an enduring image of the bloodthirsty and treacherous savage, whose murderous actions invited instructive punishment through retributive violence. This image permeated the later Protectorate when, although foundational violence had faded into administrative banality, its physicality and representations remained available for reincarnation.

Perhaps the conclusion that Childe was eaten by cannibals was foregone. We simply cannot know the actual truth about cannibalism in the Solomons. In fact, as Arens (1998) and Obeyesekere (1998) have noted, it is not the question of whether or not it happened but the presumptions surrounding its unknowability to which analytical efforts should be directed. Regardless of the physical truth of cannibalism, its tropes were a powerful source to draw upon. In a single stroke, they accused the native of habits of such abhorrence that the accusation itself could dehumanise, and questionable humanity could justify colonial brutality. But flesh-eating tales were more than cynical tools of domination. They were tales of terror. McClintock (1995) situates cannibalism as the ultimate example of fears of engulfment, the colonialist literally consumed in the savage maw.

Later, masculinist colonial adventurers could portray themselves as staunchly meeting salivating natives, and surviving the encounter. Collinson revelled in his depictions of native acquaintances' purported culinary tastes. In the New Georgia group,



‘Whiskers’, as I dubbed him, was a wicked old savage who had undoubtedly killed and *kai-kai*-ed [eaten] scores of men in his day, and even now probably partakes of human flesh occasionally (1926:175).

Not only does Collinson admit no fear in the face of the fearsome man-eater, he paternalistically bestows a pet name upon him, emerging confirmed in his staunch masculinity while the native ends belittled.

In 1927, District Officer Bell, Cadet Lillies and thirteen native government employees were attacked while collecting taxes on Malaita. They were killed, and, in response, the Protectorate, assisted by the Australian navy, launched a campaign of bloody and brutal reprisal (Keesing and Corris 1980). Newspaper clippings from 1927 hark back to the threatened ‘saturnalia of slaughter’ (R.568) of fifty years earlier. The Sydney press included headlines like ‘Expeditions Against Cannibals’, ‘Outrage By Bush Natives In the Solomons’, ‘Head-Hunters’ Lair ... Blue-Jackets To Penetrate Jungle’ and the dramatic ‘Their Arrows Tipped With Curses: Fierce Bushmen of Solomons: Skull Collectors’ (2949/27). Another report juxtaposed a picture of a native armed with spear and shield and captioned ‘A Typical Warrior of Malaita’ with another picture of *H.M.A.S Adelaide*, the captain of which ‘has had previous experience of native outbreaks, [and] is regarded by the Navy as the right man to put Fuzzy Wuzzy in his place’ (2949/27).

The mythology of the savage cannibalistic head-hunter was here able to be extensively and dramatically drawn upon when once again it suited the government to so characterise the native. Drawing from both this outrage resurgence and his own personality – ‘hasty and intolerant in his judgments’ as High Commissioner Sir Hugh Fletcher was to characterise him in a 1930 report (3 II 25/30) – Resident Commissioner Ashley issued instructions to all frontline staff on the use of armed force against the natives in 1929:

In certain stages in the development of a country, the carrying out of the civil law of the land is made impossible in application owing to either the numbers of the persons hostile to it, or by the fact that those persons are armed and intend to resist the Civil Authorities. [This] may make it necessary for Government to use force and employ armed men. (1701/32).

Beginning with an extensive historical section, the Protectorate's 1931 census (274/32) tours native savagery from first contact with the sixteenth-century Spaniards through the outrage period and to the killings of Bell and Lillies on Malaita. As Mbembe argues:

colonial terror constantly intertwines with colonially generated fantasies of wilderness and death and fictions to create the effect of the real (2003: 25).

White men meeting a violent death at native hands in the savage South Seas was a haunting image. It provoked emotional responses, and threatened the colonial racial order in which the native was inferior. Undertaking punitive expeditions, the naval forces sought to reinscribe this order, yet caught in the vortex of colonial violence, they reacted with a kind of schizophrenia, never sure whether they were the agents of an ordered system of justice, or avengers revelling in their ability to wreak destruction. A sense of empire as a male institution was the framing paradigm for a specific manifestation of imperial masculinity and government authority in the Protectorate itself. It is to the development of an administrative judiciary after the declaration of the Protectorate to which I now turn.

<sup>1</sup> As an indication of the value of this amount in real terms, during the 1890s Woodford, as Resident Commissioner, earned an annual salary of £200. The theft was not at all of an insignificant sum.

<sup>2</sup> Parts of the north, around Bougainville, were in German hands. These territories passed to Britain after World War I (Bennett, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> Also referred to in some documents as Child or Childers.

<sup>4</sup> Maxwell did not admit the possibility that the guide was deliberately trying to confuse him. Perhaps this really did not occur to him; perhaps he just did not want it to.

<sup>5</sup> ... and that heads have race!

<sup>6</sup> Much of this undoubtedly has to do with European understandings of *mana*, a point I cannot pursue here (but see Keesing 1984, Needham 1976).

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, Keesing (1986) reports that epic narratives of the *Young Dick* massacre were still being retold on Malaita into the 1960s. The focus of this project on colonialist discourse, however, means that an in-depth consideration of the native response to punitive expeditions is beyond my current scope.

<sup>8</sup> Borne out for example by the development of 'muscular Christianity' and gamesmanship (Alderson, 1998).

## Chapter Three

### **Compelled By Native Custom** *Judicial Administration 1900-1940*

Although the natives of the Solomons are peaceable and inoffensive enough when they conceive that they are under a strong hand, they are a powerful race, whose hobby is head-hunting, and who can be ferocious fighters when aroused

- Telegraph, 11/10/27 (2949/27)

Quick to slip back into the most brutal excesses of the animal world, [the native] was incapable of resisting violence and could not, alone, succeed in the long and difficult ascent toward the good and beautiful

- Achille Mbembe (2001:34)

'Dear Captain Kane,

I'm sorry.'

So began dismissed District Officer Hector MacQuarrie's letter to the Resident Commissioner, penned on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1925. 'Perhaps I am more sorry for myself than for any one else that I have been compelled to take the action I have taken' (1689/25). But MacQuarrie was not apologetic. Angry, perhaps. Threatening. Sarcastic. He wrote accusing Kane of everything from being the incompetent product of an inferior education (MacQuarrie was a Cambridge graduate, Kane was not), to the reprehensible seduction of another officer's wife. By the end of his second choleric page, MacQuarrie was unequivocal:

It is not [sic] only fair to warn you that there is not a chance in the world in [sic] my not winning this fight. Because I am right. My power therefore is infinite and invincible (1689/25).

He signed the letter, despatched it, and waited. But MacQuarrie never forced Kane's resignation or regained his position, though he spent two years demanding it, dashing off letters haphazardly oscillating between

fury and grace. This particular letter was certainly received by Kane, who had a copy transcribed and promptly forwarded to the High Commissioner. On this copy, filed in the archive, scrawled at the bottom in an anonymous hand, are the words 'letter of deranged mind'.

MacQuarrie's shift from District Officer to vehement critic of the administration forms the core of this chapter. Regardless of their validity, his impassioned criticisms of Kane and the administration expose the inner workings of Protectorate bureaucracy. His case is not only well documented in the archive, but his 1946 published account joins Collinson's in the masculinist literary genre.

In the previous chapter I introduced the idea of the Outrages as the Protectorate's founding mythology. Far from ending with the last naval patrols at the turn-of-the-century, the outrages lived on,<sup>1</sup> colouring the later administrative experience. The outrages, which inscribed native character as savage and treacherous, and white masculinity as vastly superior and endowed with judicial right, contributed to colonialist representations and configurations in the twentieth century, setting a model for understanding native behaviour that could be referred to repeatedly – as evidence for progress, for fundamental savagery, or myriad intermediate points. It is telling that even through to the 1930s, murders of white men and associations of cannibalism and headhunting were points of reference for outputs as diverse as official government annual reports and published adventure stories.<sup>2</sup> Collinson's *Life and Laughter 'Midst the Cannibals* (1926) might foreground frivolity, but it also emphasises *his* bravery, and *their* savagery. While we might have a laugh, we must not forget that they are cannibals; native violence, therefore, is placed as a formative condition of native being. A point that has especially been noted in the critique of cannibalism reportage (e.g., Arens 1998, Obeyesekere 1998,

Pieterse 1992) is that to show that the other is violent proves their savagery, in turn proving the need for colonial subjugation. In the Solomons, the outrages were the mould utilised to represent the natives the Protectorate sought to administer, and it was a mould that continually shaped colonialist relationships with violence.

The declaration of the Protectorate was the British assumption of legal responsibility over the Solomons and the inauguration of a generalised concern with systematic law and order. Where the naval patrols were primarily concerned with inter-racial violence, the Protectorate engaged with *all* acts of violence and began policing incidents between natives. Criminal trial records here enter the archive. These provide testimony from the accused and from witnesses, rendered into English or Pidgin by court-appointed translators. Commentaries on the cases, written by administrative staff, are often appended, including remarks on sentencing, case discussions, and arguments for remission. Given that trials form the bulk of the archival records of twentieth-century violence in the Protectorate, my analysis in this chapter will grow from them.

Jackson (1978) argues that it was not the navy's punitive expeditions that led to pacification, but police and judicial actions after the Protectorate's declaration. I am not concerned with how pacification occurred but with the discursive *milieu* that followed. Even though naval actions did not result in pacification, early governmental tactics were little different (Jackson 1978), and so the outrage period and the new Protectorate bled into one another. Mbembe (2001) writes of founding violence being replaced by mundane, persistent violence. This was certainly the case with the Protectorate, where colonialists settling into a bureaucratic

routine envisaged themselves administering a new violence-curbing era of law and order.

In the system in which the native was scrutinised, analysed and ultimately judged, this was violence mediated, if not created, by a white male gaze. White masculinity and justice were closely connected. During the outrage period, men-of-war were as concerned to flex white male muscle as to curb undesirable behaviour. The subsequent judicial system continued to function as the officially condoned punishing arm of the government's masculine authority.

The criminal native was male. Native women did not appear as the accused in cases of violent crime; they did, however, appear in adultery cases (Chapter Four). Judicial encounters with native violence occurred as an administrative cornerstone servicing pacification, but also emerge as key homosocial records – the white male interrogating the suspect native male. European definitions of masculinity drew upon capacity for aggression, with the potential to enact physical violence marked as a male trait (Breckenridge 1998) irrespective of expected 'civilised' bourgeois restraint (Wood 2004). And, as Chapter Two indicated, even bourgeois masculine restraint required the retention of an ability to administer physical punishment.

Sitting in judgment, government officers contrasted their restraint against native violence. Yet, I suggest in this chapter, while violence was indeed problematic, the administrative position was not universally condemnatory.

Condemnation of native-native violence particularly weakened in murder cases with female victims. For example, in 1918 Afukona, of Malaita, described by Acting Judicial Commissioner I.G. Bates as 'a very young man whose appearance and demeanour did not strike me as being of a vicious type' (2040/18), appeared before the Tulagi Court

accused of murdering a woman named Baulifoia with a tomahawk. Afukona pleaded guilty, testifying that he had been offered money to kill Baulifoia, then enraged and provoked by other men's claims that she would defecate on his head if he did not. Convicted, Afukona faced the death penalty, but Bates recommended him for clemency,<sup>3</sup> explaining that

[Afukona] had killed the woman Baulifoia while inflamed by a form of curse or swearing which among the natives of Malaita is regarded as very serious and frequently if not generally, leads the person to whom it is addressed to murder *by way of vindicating his manhood* (2040/18, my emphasis).

Against a focus upon an emasculating curse, masculine vindication did not need elaboration; Bates seemed to consider it self-evident. Pointing to Afukona's good nature and asking for clemency, Bates effectively lent support to a right of masculine assertion. Discursive emphasis on native savagery also meant that, at least implicitly, native actions were expected to be more physical than reasonable.

Similarly, in 1921 seven Malaitan men were put on trial for stoning a woman to death a woman. Justifying their actions,

Hoheri said we have come together about killing this woman she knows how to poison. If you don't kill her she will poison more and finish everybody. Hoheri said no one must be angry for the killing of this woman (1262/1921).

All seven men were found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. Yet, considering the victim's 'repute as a poisoner' and the group's stated motives, Chief Judicial Commissioner Sir Charles Davson<sup>4</sup> concluded that 'I think this is a case in which the power of commutation may properly be exercised'.<sup>5</sup> The victim was portrayed as a trouble-making woman whose death was justified, and advocating commutation effectively meant that Davson acceded to that portrayal.



As Chapter Four illustrates, women were also killed for committing adultery. Female victimhood coalesced with female guilt, so that defence representations of women provoking violence against them went unchallenged. Of course, not all murder cases had female victims, but those that did usually proceeded in such fashion. Effective judicial acceptance of native masculine assertion against native women betrayed similar colonialist opinions. Homosociality saw native men on trial, but it was native women who were cast as trouble-makers in an administration that excluded them from the core colonial relationship – one between men.

One of the earliest native-native murder trials under the Protectorate was presided over by Woodford in 1898 (342/98 R.601). A youth called Mai Mai, thought to be about sixteen years of age, was prosecuted for murdering his father at Ulawa. Witnesses testified that Mai Mai's father had rebuked him for going out at night after women. In anger, the youth threw a spear, hitting his father in the foot, causing his death five days later from symptoms likely indicating tetanus. How the death was reported to Woodford is unclear, but he travelled for three days to get to the scene, accompanied by a small party of police.<sup>6</sup> At the tail end of the outrages he likely envisaged that his suspect would not simply capitulate. But of course this is also his account and contains an element of self-congratulation. He took partial credit for a peaceful apprehension, explaining that 'I handcuffed him [Mai Mai] before he could make any resistance', highlighting his canny skill at nabbing his man. Like the outrage period in which naval captains amassed all the credit for expeditions, the model of justice delivered by one man as anointed state servant continues here.

Woodford's report fast-forwards to the trial. He represents it as a meeting of surrounding notables, about one-hundred of whom assembled in the village – 'because I wished that the natives should, as far as possible, conduct the trial themselves' (342/98). This gathering signalled the administrative effort to draw natives into complicity with the developing judicial regime; a complicity that later led to a system of government-employed village and district headmen. Additionally, it continued the performative vein of the outrage retributions by displaying government juridical authority. But it also heralded a movement away from the outrages since the performance was not one of direct physical might. Instead, judicial emphasis shifted from punishing the wider group to the criminalised individual. The native was now to be held accountable before a codified law, and his actions were to be tried and judged according to this. Punishment was to be weighed against the crime *and* against the criminal, and, accordingly, meted out in a considered way. Woodford had therefore not only declared a new order, he had sought to encourage its acceptance through the participation of influential natives.

The gathering, according to Woodford, considered that Mai Mai had done wrong, but without premeditation or malicious intent, and, while advocating punishment, did not wish for the death sentence (prescribed for murder). Since they offered no alternatives, Woodford suggested that 'it would be sufficient if I took Mai Mai to Tulagi for three years' in the hope 'he might yet live to grow up a good man' (342/98). Paternalistically couched – almost evoking an image of Mai Mai as Woodford's personal houseguest – this glosses that Tulagi, as administrative capital, was the site of the Protectorate jail: the sentence was for three years imprisonment.

Woodford's narration foregrounds his role as merely overseeing a judicial consideration actually undertaken by the gathering. Yet his summation to the High Commissioner – 'they offered to take the greatest interest in the trial and the sentence was fully approved of' (342/98) – unravels this, pointing to a far greater controlling influence. Woodford, both by and with his account, played his cards rather well. To the High Commissioner he presented an image of himself as cool, rational administrator, dealing with natives with seasoned capability and obtaining an all-round acceptable result. Just two years into his term as the Protectorate's first Resident Commissioner, he was ensuring that his superiors recognised his suitability for the role. Nevertheless, he had ordained a new era of formalised and systematic justice with all the performance of a man-of-war and none of the destruction.

The outrage period had directed its focus towards crimes against Europeans, and largely ignored violence between natives. Whilst the declaration of the Protectorate meant that *all* violent acts were annexed to state jurisdiction, as the Mai Mai case demonstrates, the state proceeded quite gingerly with this. While keen to enforce their legal jurisdiction, the officers of the new Protectorate nevertheless recognised that natives would find it unfamiliar. A certain scope for amnesty was thus allowed at High Commission discretion. As the Protectorate matured, native complicity grew and acts of outrage declined. While the outrage mythology was never eliminated, earlier punishing methodologies became infrequently drawn upon, replaced by a discourse of native welfare. Where previously the disciplinarian state had angrily dispatched its men-of-war, now the homosocial state figured itself benignly assisting native men. In correspondence with F.M. Campbell (Officer Commanding Constabulary) and Jack Barley in 1917,

Resident Commissioner Barnett set out his opinions on how the island of Malaita could best be policed:

Because a certain section of the native community have abandoned their former evil ways and desire to live peacefully, it does not follow that the others who are not so inclined, should be coerced or pointed out for police interference and be made liable for arrest on account of the more civilized of their country men holding different views and being horrified at the commission of an outrage which but a few years ago they themselves would have participated in. I hold the opinion that it is only a question of time and frequent communication with the more determined offenders when the worst of them will see the error of their ways (1551/17).

He advocated a slow and cautious approach, emphasising that it was indeed important that the native become civilised, but that the best way for this to be achieved was through benevolent guidance rather than direct force. The native, in other words, had become a creature best tamed compassionately.

As administrative control strengthened, legal authority grew and retreated from local participation towards centralised bureaucracy. Constantly evident in British colonialism is an appetite for continuous, reliable administrative order (Perry 2005). The rulebooks of bureaucracy were enlisted to troop into the colonies, listing ordinances and laying out procedures; rendering the empire's entirety orderly, readable, understandable, and ultimately controllable (Richards 1992).

There were numerous gradations in the bureaucratic colonial legal system. District Officers (D.O.s) were delegated powers to essentially act in the role of local magistrates. Most cases in their districts were, at least initially, routed through them. The D.O. typically sat in sole judgment and pronounced sentence. But while they could rule their own miniature dominions (like Filose in Chapter Five), their

powers only went so far. Serious cases - murders, rapes and most violent offences involving Europeans - were referred to Tulagi court for trial by the Judicial Commissioner, sitting with two to four assessors from the European community.<sup>7</sup> This did not entirely bypass the D.O. since he could first make a preliminary investigation, then either dismiss the case or pass it on to Tulagi. D.O.s did not always follow procedure however, but if caught out exceeding their judicial powers would be reined in and rebuked. For example, a four-year prison sentence meted out by District Officer Brownlees in a 1936 incest case was quashed as he was held to have exceeded his authority by not passing the case on to Tulagi (301/36). This incident seems to have been more of a technicality than a D.O. truly turned Napoleon, since the sentence was overturned with regret that the convicted native could not be punished further. This was not the case with MacQuarrie.

A Japanese trader, living for some time as the only trader throughout a vast and scattered district and one not completely civilized, entered my police barracks and outraged the sensibilities of my fine loyal police, by attacking the authority they respected. After very careful thought, based on my experience in this District I stood by my police and sentenced him to six month's imprisonment (1689/25).

So MacQuarrie relates the first part of the story of his dealings with the trader M.K. Ito. The trial to which he refers was held in April 1925. In July, Kane contacted the High Commissioner, bringing the case to his attention in the belief that a severe miscarriage of justice had occurred. Consequently, the sentence was overturned and Ito was released from prison.<sup>8</sup> So what exactly had happened for MacQuarrie to be so *outraged* that he had summarily tried and imprisoned Ito? The trader had entered the Santa Cruz police barracks, accompanied by a plantation

doctor who had come to examine an ill native policeman. According to the testimony of Lance-Corporal Vouza:

[Ito] said “three boys along Santa Cruz and the Reef Islands havem no food for three months and no smoke”,<sup>9</sup> then he said in the language of the Solomon (Guadalcanal) “TAVIA TAIJA DOU”, which means “the master is no good”. Then before going out he said “Captain Macquarrie is no good” (1182/25).

Claiming that the final part of the evidence, impugning his own name, was inadmissible, MacQuarrie focussed attention on the words *tavia taija dou*. Ito was charged with:

[using] such words ... to members of the Police Force as to seriously undermine the authority of the officer in charge and ... an attempt to induce members of the Police Force to neglect to perform their duty (1182/25).

Six months imprisonment, then, for a heated remark; and even in MacQuarrie’s (1946) own narrative Ito was completely drunk at the time.

There is not a lot told about Ito himself in the archive. Perhaps he just garnered government attention because, unlike other traders, he was not white. MacQuarrie (1946) suspected he was a Japanese spy.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after his release, Ito wrote a letter to planter acquaintances complaining that French traders from the New Hebrides had learnt of his imprisonment and travelled to the Solomons to grab his business. He continued:

It will interest you to know that the D.O. [MacQuarrie] expressed to the Frenchmen great pleasure in their arrival on account of the fact that *they were white and I was not*. This in actual speech. I tell you this to illustrate that perhaps the D.O. is personally prejudiced against me (2859/25, my emphasis).

In MacQuarrie’s book, Ito is written as incapable of speaking ‘proper’ English, and only communicating with Europeans in Pidgin, but this

letter clearly puts the lie to that. Given that MacQuarrie spent two years clamouring for Kane's resignation (and was still sniping in 1946) it is a fair assumption that he certainly knew how to hold a grudge. In this respect, Ito's remarks landed in MacQuarrie's lap.

But the case was not simply about Ito's racial identity or MacQuarrie's personal sense of affront, but also about white control over native police. Clearly, the incident gave MacQuarrie an opportunity to appease his dislike of Ito, so its gravity was likely inflated. But this does not negate a glimmer of true panic in MacQuarrie's actions. Ito had made comments disparaging white men to native men. His membership of neither race increased their threat, for I suggest that in questioning white authority and suitability to rule over the natives he offered a potential alternative. The charge constituted the incident as an attempted inducement of natives to neglect their duties. MacQuarrie's charges not only stuck a knife into the scorned Ito, they also propounded a view of the special relationship that white men had as controllers of native men.

These were police – natives brought into such complicity with the colonial regime that they had become its judicial footsoldiers. The soldierly comparison is indeed apt, for the Armed Constabulary, as they were known, were certainly trained as a small militia. In 1932, a day's training for a new recruit involved:

6.30	- 7.0 a.m.	Platoon drill with arms
7.0	- 8.0 a.m.	Physical drill, games, running etc.
9.0	- 9.30 "	School of instruction (Police duties)
9.40	- 10.0 "	Musketry training
10.0	- 10.30 "	Open order drill etc etc
10.40	- 11.0 "	Musketry training
11.0	- 12 noon	Bush exercises
1.30	- 2 p.m	Instructional school (Police)

2.0 - 3.30 p.m Bayonet practice, musketry, open order drill (1198/32).

Since one of the major frustrations of the outrage period was the frequent inability of naval landing parties to penetrate inland, constabulary training aimed to remedy this. Detailed training exercises ferried recruits to rough terrain to practice manoeuvres. There had been a change, therefore, from white men struggling through the bush to apprehend native suspects to white men instead despatching their native agents. While in partnership with natives, Europeans clearly commanded. MacQuarrie read Ito's comments as threatening to disintegrate this partnership by taking a swipe at the authority which European superiority demanded. By charging Ito he asserted white authority and homosociality.

The third layer of the judicial system was the High Commissioner in Fiji. He was endowed with special powers to alter sentences, so it was through him that Ito's sentence was quashed. The routine expectation was that the High Commissioner would review severe cases, and a formalised appeal system emerged in the 1930s. The Protectorate judiciary were compelled to adhere to the rule-book when it came to sentences – if a murder suspect was found guilty, the death sentence was pronounced. Circumstances that might warrant clemency were detailed to the High Commissioner, with the Resident or Judicial Commissioner trying to argue a persuasive case and nudge him along in the right direction.

But when the Ito case went to the High Commissioner, it was not a routine review. Rather, Kane had specifically isolated the case. It is instructive to wonder why exactly he did so. Certainly, from the facts of the case, MacQuarrie was not primarily concerned with objectively exercising judicial authority. Cases were investigated where the D.O.



had exceeded his bounds, but how many were left standing, conveniently overlooked or obligingly allowed through, is unknown. Concentrating on correspondence to and from the High Commission, the archive preserves very few district records,<sup>11</sup> making it difficult to tell just how extraordinary such cases were. What is evident, however, is that there was little love lost between MacQuarrie and Kane (MacQuarrie 1946). I suspect that just as Ito's outburst was a prime opportunity for MacQuarrie, MacQuarrie's judicial response was a boon for Kane.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 1925 MacQuarrie's fears about losing authority over the police were fully realised:

Tonight, in my office, my corporal [Vouza] was called. He stood there and the master of "Ranadi" [the Government vessel] told him in the most forcible way imaginable that I was "finished along Government" and that my orders had not to be obeyed (1689/25).

Kane had ordered MacQuarrie's dismissal. It had not come as a surprise. Two months previously MacQuarrie, with characteristic literary drama, wrote to the High Commissioner, Eyre Hutson:

I expect to be dismissed and at once removed from this District but if my funeral pyre can shed light on a dark situation then my official death will not have been in vain (1689/25).

Kane and MacQuarrie disagreed over many things, but the true clash was the infanticide case of Sam, Mobe, and Niola. Allegedly, in January 1924, these three men took the newborn infant of Niola's sister Niamanga and buried it alive, believing it unviable. On the basis of native testimony, European officers speculated that Niamanga had gone into labour prematurely. Some other officers, notably MacQuarrie,

speculated that the child was born syphilitic. In depositions, Niamanga described the state of her newborn and the subsequent reaction:

When the picaninny come it was “too too much small feller” all the same a devil devil ... Its legs were all the same boils and milk come from its legs, they [the accused] said that they would take the baby and bury it since it was no good and legs belong it were dead. I am sorry a little bit but I say “Yes take this baby for it is no good” (2325/25).

To the mother, and to onlookers, the sickly infant could not survive.

Indeed, they questioned whether it was even alive; witness Wari testified:

I heard it [the infant] make a noise. I do not think this was the noise made by a child who is alive, but just the wind going out from it. It sounded like i---m i---m I do not think that this baby alive since before I had seen it and it was no good (2325/25).

The solution, agreed to by Niamanga, was to remove the child. Davie, described in court testimony as a local chief, was brought in to explain applicable native custom:

Before (old custom) it was the custom to treat new born babies like this. If the baby was a good baby and it could be reared than it was all right. If the baby is no good and we think it is not alive, but just full of wind that comes out and it is altogether too much small, then we take it [and] bury it (2325/25).

His testimony had colonialist currency through the status they assigned to him as a ‘chief’ and therefore designated customary expert. He contributed the argument that what the three men had done was not an act of exceptional outrage, but the way in which similar cases had been traditionally dealt with.<sup>12</sup> Citing the weight of evidence against a murder charge, MacQuarrie dismissed the case and the accused were set free.<sup>13</sup>

But there was a very large complication. MacQuarrie had only tried Mobe and Niola. Sam, the third accused, was arrested earlier by another D.O., Colin Wilson, and thereby tried separately. This would not have posed a problem if both D.O.s had come to the same conclusion, but they did not. Wilson upheld the charges against Sam, referring the case on to the Tulagi Court for full criminal trial. There, he was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death, although with a successful recommendation for mercy sent on to the High Commissioner. This case is a perfect example of those three layers of the judicial system all working together. It would be perfect, that is, if the two varying judgments had not created a substantial predicament.

There were now two factions – one side, that of MacQuarrie, believed that the three men had buried a syphilitic foetus for which life could not be sustained, and supported the dismissal of any criminal charges against them; the other side, that of Colin Wilson, believed that, while there were extenuating circumstances, charges should still apply. Wilson's opinion had effectively been borne out by the Tulagi court. Predictably, Kane sided with Wilson.

The vociferous criticism began. MacQuarrie focussed his critical attention on what he considered Wilson's inadequate trying of the case. He argued that Wilson was inexperienced in the administrative role and in dealing with the natives of Santa Cruz. In a May 1925 letter to Hutson, MacQuarrie declared:

I beg, on behalf of the people of this District, that whatever be my fate officially and if I am proved to be correct, that these people may be spared the administration of Mr Wilson. He may be able to command their fear; I suspect that he will have to spend many many years here before he can regain either their respect or affection (1689/25).

MacQuarrie claimed native support, setting out that it was not just he that found fault with Wilson's administration, but the Santa Cruz population as well. They, he implied, had been so profoundly alienated by Wilson's actions that it would take innumerable years for him to claw back any semblance of a homosocial relationship with them. We know from the Ito case that MacQuarrie took that relationship very seriously. To allege Wilson's inability to maintain it was a grave insult indeed.

Next spotlighted by MacQuarrie was Wilson's actual hearing. There were three aspects to which he took exception – the interpreter, the witnesses, and the medical evidence. Essentially then, he sought to expose the entire trial as a shambles. The interpreter used by Wilson was a man by the name of Johnny Mamuli. A convicted criminal; and no less one whose actions, although occurring close on twenty years after it had ended, closely resembled those of the outrage period. In 1917/18 Mamuli, wanted for the murders of three natives of Santa Cruz, had become an outlaw leader, his rebellion complete with a shooting showdown against government officers (57/18). Not only did MacQuarrie consider Mamuli a grave criminal, he further argued that he possessed very little understanding of the dialect he interpreted. By this account, Wilson was influenced not by a reliable and trustworthy interpreter, but a marauding native whose translations were vague guesses. Even, MacQuarrie's criticisms continued, had there been a decent interpreter, the witnesses called to testify were flawed. Wilson's trial had relied on the testimony of women; a decision MacQuarrie smeared, categorically stating that 'female witnesses in the Solomons are invariably difficult' (1689/25). Again, this gravely questioned Wilson's homosociality. A translator who had only a few years previously been a sworn enemy of the government, women as witnesses ... no wonder MacQuarrie could pour doubt upon his ability to ever develop an

administrative homosociality on Santa Cruz! Ultimately, and having himself navigated the same issue, MacQuarrie argued that Wilson had overlooked medical evidence regarding the infant's life-status and consequently misjudged the case.

While it was Wilson who came in for MacQuarrie's censure, it was to the High Commissioner that he furnished most of his letters, and Kane who took the defensive. Documenting the opposing case, Kane asserted that Wilson's deposition was merely a preliminary for the formal hearing at Tulagi, and thus of little consequence as any errors or oversights would be picked up and rectified by the Judicial Commissioner. This laid down a vision in which the D.O.s were not at all lords of their demarcated dominions but simply front-line staff answerable to centralised management. Of course the Resident Commissioner wanted to see things this way, and indeed, such ideals reached their zenith under the authoritarian reign of his successor F.N. Ashley. Kane further stated that any evidence in relation to native custom on Santa Cruz would not be considered in the pronouncement of a guilty verdict. Invoking the bureaucratic rule-book, he noted that these matters would instead be taken into account by the High Commissioner reviewing the case, and only then (as they did) result in a commutation of the death penalty. This bureaucratic ode was evidently meant to subsume and overwhelm all MacQuarrie's criticisms. Glaringly, perhaps, Kane never directly dealt with individual points – especially MacQuarrie's references to Mamuli.

High Commissioner Rodwell's 1923 confidential report described Kane as:

An able courageous and resourceful Irishman, seen at better advantage in difficult and abnormal situations than in the hum-drum life of peaceful and organised administration. Of masterful disposition and a little

impatient of opposition of restraint .... Combines much force of character with certain weaknesses .... He is very ambitious and, with the experience he has gained in the Solomons, is well fitted for a high post in any "Colony in the making." In an emergency he would always act promptly and take his chance of his action being approved, as it probably would be. Smart in appearance and has a "way" with coloured races (3 II 20/1923).

This portrait of Kane as ambitious colonialist is not too far removed from the impression of the assured Cambridge alumni MacQuarrie. Both were men of strong character, determined to each have their own way, and incensed at encountering obstacles. Kane, with his "'way" with coloured races' squared against MacQuarrie, self-declared defender of the native. Finding that they each stood as an obstacle in each other's path, the resulting fireworks were inevitable.

Under these circumstances, smooth and dispassionate judicial operations were unlikely. Kane and MacQuarrie were drawn into conflict over legal operations, but at a deeper level, the antagonism between them emerged from their contested abilities to dictate the inscription of criminality upon the native. While they referenced the 'real facts' of the case – medical reports and suchlike – they clashed over who had the ability to define the truth of these. What was truly in dispute were the ways in which the power to make meaning was being exercised. It played out not as a directly personal feud, but routed through the natives each man claimed to know best how to administer. It was also, therefore, a debate over how best to administer homosocially.

Kane's bureaucratic fastidiousness here highlights the operation of the process whereby the deepest interrogation of the alleged crime occurred after verdict and sentencing. What became punishable was not the

crime itself, but the reasoning, motivation or circumstances surrounding it. Understandings drawn from such an interrogation were funnelled into sentence reviews that sought to discern eligibility for clemency.

Firstly, clemency could occur when the sanity of the perpetrator was drawn into question. The entry of serious considerations of native insanity into case notes was a phenomenon beginning in the late 1920s, culminating in plans for an asylum at Tulagi in the 1930s. For example, when the Malaitan Eabo was tried at Tulagi in January 1930 for the murder of his infant daughter, whom he had seized hold of and dashed to the ground, he testified:

I was mad, and I took up my child and “threw her away”. Something came upon me and I picked up my child MAILIU and “threw her away” ... If I had not been in that state of mind, I could not have dealt with the child that way. I have been like this for a couple of years, and at the end of that time I killed the child.  
When I am afflicted that way I eat the bark from the trees and pick up ground and eat it (608/30).

Albeit translated, Eabo offered an eloquent rendering of his own mental state. But Judicial Commissioner Ragnar Hyne was wary:

I am informed that such excuse for, or explanation of wrong-doing is a frequent one among Solomon Islanders, and when EABO raised, in effect, the defence of insanity at the trial, this characteristic of Solomon Islanders was borne in mind (608/30).

While here used as a disparaging reference to untrustworthy natives trying to extricate themselves from judicial punishment, Hyne’s remark has the unintended consequence of showing that the legal system was perhaps not as omnipotent as it purported to be. At least some natives had grasped its machinations, and knew exactly how to exploit them.<sup>14</sup> In Eabo’s case, Hyne *did* deliver a verdict of insanity, claiming that the reports of other witnesses substantiated it.

The second form of further judgment was in recommendations to the High Commissioner. Here the native was judged on his personality or, rather, 'type' of native-ness, and on his motives. Such judgments determined whether he would face the noose, or have his sentence commuted to imprisonment. These appraisals illuminate European representations and interpretations of native acts. In the trials themselves, native actions were certainly measured, but in stark and sparse fashion. Where trials ascertained basic innocence or guilt, sentence reviews sought to interpret the perpetrator's actions on a more minute level. They interrogated not only the bare facts of the case, but the native himself. Since the High Commissioner made his decision on the basis of information provided to him, it was here that Protectorate officers had the opportunity to give their opinions on the case. While they could not make the decision, they functioned as influential advisors.

In January 1927 three Mala natives appeared before the Tulagi court. Apuilaro and Baibai were charged with murder, and Lauia was charged with incitement. The murder, Apuilaro explained, was committed because:

A boy ... was taken by a man named Malaiken to work for the Malayta Co. [He] died, so the prisoner Lauia, of the same line, wanted one of Malaiken's line killed. I undertook to kill for the sake of the money (720/27).

The interesting aspect of this case was the commentary appended to it, contributed to by both the Protectorate's Judicial Commissioner N.P. de Heveringham, and the Fiji-based Acting Chief Judicial Commissioner for the Western Pacific, MacKenzie.<sup>15</sup> In the trial proper, all three native men had been found guilty and sentenced to death. However, the assessors recommended Lauia to mercy on account of his old age. This request for clemency became the topic of an ongoing discussion between



the two legal minds around custom and punishment. Schmidt (1990) identifies the policy of following native custom except where viewed repugnant to British norms as a feature of the colonial state. As her discussion suggests, both custom and repugnance were fields of substantial ambiguity.

In his summation, de Heveringham cited Frank Hewitt, a white island resident credited with 'long experience of the natives', who had acted as an assessor. Hewitt provided information delineating the custom of holding a line responsible for a death, and retributively killing a member of it. Lauia was described as being about fifty years old, and, by MacKenzie, as therefore 'bred up in such a tradition' and profoundly influenced by it. The recommendation for mercy was not so much about Lauia's age making him unfit to undergo punishment as it was about the irresistible force that custom was deemed to hold over him. His age was extrapolated into the idea that he was caught in the clutch of custom. Fuelled by a homosocial emphasis on native welfare, the administration sought to be understanding of this. Adherence to custom was therefore interpreted not as an individual failing for which Lauia could, or indeed should, be held fully responsible. Rather, it was an extenuating circumstance, a motivation that had to be taken into account in a review of his sentence.

Normally, such details would simply be forwarded to the High Commissioner as strong reasons for clemency. This case stands out, however, because, like the separate trials and different decisions for Sam, Mobe and Niola, it reveals a judicial problem. Lauia's case was controversial because he had been tried and found guilty with two younger men, creating a quandary because it was *only* to Lauia that adherence to custom had been ascribed, and only for Lauia that clemency was asked. Custom was not declared to be the motivator for

Apuilaro and Baibai who MacKenzie described as having acted for monetary gain. Thus the core problem - custom was positioned as the cause behind the murder, yet those who had committed the act itself had *not* been fuelled by custom. Some kind of solution had to be found, and it fell to de Heveringham and MacKenzie to thrash out what this was to be.

Refusing to support the assessors' calls for extending clemency to Lauia, de Heveringham opined:

I cannot suppose that ... any of them, were ignorant of the law, nor do I think it advisable ... since natives might acquire the view that an elderly man can commit an offence with less risk of punishment than a younger man (720/1927).

In his eyes, all were equally guilty and all should be equally punished. Solving the problem, all three would go to the scaffold; their fates instructive in that same performative mode that marked the outrage period. MacKenzie, on the other hand, was not so keen on an execution. He ultimately supported recognising the effect of custom on Lauia, and his commentary offers a fascinating insight into the Protectorate's legal process:

I confess to a feeling of dissatisfaction with the way the case has been tried. It gives me the impression that the Court has considered that in view of the plea of guilty tendered it is absolved from taking the same care as though the case were fought on an original plea of not guilty. The object of proceedings such as these is to protect the accused from his own possible ignorance by going into the case with the greatest care to endeavour to find out any matter in the accused's favour (720/1927).

This positioned MacKenzie squarely in the native welfare camp, and it was such a viewpoint that won out. The death sentences for all three condemned men were commuted to penal servitude for life by the High Commissioner in August 1927.

MacKenzie's comments rehearse another phenomenon. In a large number of court cases, archival records show that the accused pleaded guilty, but that this plea was overwritten by the court itself with a plea of not guilty. Firstly, it cast the native as requiring protection from his own ignorance. Secondly, it opened the case up to a much deeper interrogation than a straightforward guilty plea would allow. Placing these together, the representation of native ignorance was *required* in order to endorse the state's scrupulous scrutiny of him.

It was natives, who, in the colonial imaginary, were the perpetrators of violence. It was they who were responsible for massacres (whereas colonialists punished), and they who lacked the self-containment necessary to avert small-scale interpersonal violence. This violence was portrayed as custom. Headhunting was custom, vengeance murder was custom, violence against adulterers (Chapter Four) was custom. Custom was something primitive. Europeans, as far as they were concerned, did not have custom, they had normality and civilisation. This, as I have shown, connected to questions of excusability – the High Commissioner could, and did, commute sentences based on the role of custom in the crime. Since the perceived hold of custom on the native mind dictated the scope of punishment inflicted on the native body, it effectively became a legal issue to be negotiated. It appeared in tandem with notions of civilisation, the two being played against each other in analysis of the magnitude of the punishment to be meted out. The criminal native, then, was positioned between custom and civilisation, and what the administration tried to do was to cement an exact position for him, to pin him down at an exact coordinate which would then determine how the force of law played out upon him.

Native actions were thereby appropriated by colonialist discourse. They were analysed, interpreted and even manipulated against a model of colonial punishment. Native violence here left its physicality, and was re-enacted in the administration's controlled and ordered paper trails. This European-interpreted violence was then circled back and placed on to the native, transformed into the measure of his character and the punishment he would undergo. The native's ability or capacity to physically enact violence, the actions which resided in his body, were in this way appropriated by the administration. They became no longer his but theirs; ultimately theirs to redeploy upon his body.

This chapter speaks back to the outrage violence, and forwards to masculinity and homosociality. Through the legal system, violence was extracted from its immediate physicality and redeployed in colonialist meaning-making. It became a channel for white men to navigate their understandings of native men. Representations of custom and savagery were derived from the outrage mythology, and combined with a flowering administrative homosociality. It was neither smooth nor consistent, but debates ultimately came down to power over interpretation. That is, knowledge of the male native. The next chapter extends this, examining androcentric adultery legislation and demonstrating government efforts to exclude native women from the colonial relationship.

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> And on and on ... if reportage on recent unrest in the Solomons is anything to go by.

<sup>2</sup> Even up to the present, the tourist to the Solomon Islands can visit sites where s/he will be told about 'former headhunters' and shown 'head-hunting shrines' (for

example, Seach 2006), most of which are actually ancestral shrines (Dureau, personal communication).

<sup>3</sup> I have been unable to ascertain whether or not the recommendation was successful.

<sup>4</sup> The trial was held by Davson at Tulagi, although his title suggests he was actually attached to the High Commission.

<sup>5</sup> Again, I have been unable to ascertain the actual outcome.

<sup>6</sup> Before Solomon Islanders were recruited, the Protectorate's police force consisted of Fijians (Bennett, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> In the earliest days of the Protectorate, before the appointment of a full-time Judicial Commissioner, suspects were sometimes immediately sent to be tried in the administrative centre at Fiji, although such cases were reduced as Tulagi grew in consequence.

<sup>8</sup> Although from MacQuarrie's published account (1946) it seems that rather than being imprisoned, Ito was requisitioned as boat's crew on MacQuarrie's district tour.

<sup>9</sup> This refers to plantation labourers, who, as well as provisions, were contractually entitled to a regular tobacco ration (Bennett, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> Concern about Japanese designs upon the islands predated WWII's Pacific theatre.

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps exacerbated by the Japanese destruction of Tulagi in World War II.

<sup>12</sup> The actuality is beyond the scope of this work.

<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, in the same file, Kane notes that while Mobe and Niola were dismissed in June 1925, he found them still in custody when he visited Vanikoro some time around August or September that year, and had to advise them that they were free. This is puzzling given MacQuarrie's strong declarations regarding his concern for their welfare. In his book, he claims that he kept them at Vanikoro because he expected more to be made of the case by Kane.

<sup>14</sup> Johnny Mamuli had been declared insane at his trial (1214/32), but it is difficult to believe that the outlaw leader, 'a cunning native [who] talks good English' (233/19), and who the government later employed, was a raving lunatic.

<sup>15</sup> Full name not given.

## Chapter Four

### Of Most Serious Offences and £5 Fines *Representing Natives in Adultery Legislation*

“Now, hear, altogether man! .... Liza he go along another fella man ... no good! Nutbauna he do him something no good along mary ... no good! Now this something ... he tambu ... along black fella ... he tambu along white man ... he tambu along altogether man along altogether world!”  
- Government Officer’s speech in Collinson (1926:125)

He walked straight on till he came to a line of white flowers and stopped in front of them. At once two beautiful arms came out from the nearest plant and began to pull him so strongly that he could not fight against them. From above the flowers came heads – women’s heads – with beautiful faces and dark brown hair

- Dictation for Queen Victoria School<sup>1</sup> entrance examination, 1932 (614/33).

A beautiful South Seas maiden languishes in marriage to a man old, ugly, and deformed. Repellent in his hideousness, this hateful husband subjects her to regular vicious beatings. Her life is to be pitied. Then it happens that she falls in love, with a fine specimen of a young native man. The two lovers run away to seek their happiness together. But the evil husband will not silently suffer desertion, and seeks out justice. Along with the government police, he catches up with the young couple and demands that his wife return to him, and her lover be punished for adultery. The nail-biting denouement to this tale occurs on a volcanic plateau... as the lovers and the husband race across it, the thin crust cracks, and the husband falls screaming to his death in a mass of red-hot lava. The lovers, safe at last, are left to their embrace.

This romance is related in Collinson’s (1926) account. And, he claims to have been a witness to the dramatic finale atop the volcano.

His narration though, bears such a resemblance to a fairy story that I have little doubt that, albeit perhaps sparked by a grain of truth, it is a highly embellished South Seas fantasy. As a concoction of drama and romance, it presents a viewpoint of native sex and adultery completely antithetical to my archival sources.<sup>2</sup> This is my point of departure in an engagement with the inordinate amounts of time Protectorate officials spent contemplating adultery.<sup>3</sup> Legally, adultery was defined as sexual intercourse between a person married either in the church or customarily, and any person other than their spouse. Heterosexuality was assumed, with so-called 'unnatural crime' addressed under separate legislation. Native sexuality potentially posed just as much (if not more) of a threat to the colonial order as native violence (Stoler 1995). In response, as I argue, adultery was discursively appropriated and redeployed by government masculinity and homosociality.

Mbembe (2001) writes of colonial *commandement* as effecting a combination of authority and morality. The pairing of these notions is evident in the colonial concern with native adultery. But Mbembe's reference is a fleeting one; he makes the linkage, moves on and leaves morality unexplained. In this chapter, I seek to elucidate government interest in a moral terrain, suggesting that the category of offences referred to by the colonial administration as 'sexual crime' allowed white men to negotiate their own homosocial authority. Adulterous acts had a ripple effect, characterised by a surge of male attention. Typically, the desiring man was punished by the aggrieved man (be he husband or relative), and in turn all were scrutinised by white men. As I will elaborate, such emphasis created a certain space for judging the native woman as well.

From the 1920s onwards, debate raged not only on how to deal with native adultery but about causative forces. Recounting these

debates, I elaborate a colonialist contextualisation of native adultery, before moving on to read this theoretically.

Laracy and Laracy have discussed the Protectorate's adultery legislation alongside the regulation of marriage and divorce, prior to the 1960s. They envision the administration, generally non-interventionist, forced into action over situations, such as adultery,

which required attention of more than just a police or supervisory kind, and ... raised in the minds of administrators large questions as to the propriety and feasibility of such extensions of their responsibility (1980:133).

Narrating regulatory developments, they particularly concentrate on the administrative negotiation of custom. While my own reading also brings this out, I further identify a central concern with gender, overlooked by Laracy and Laracy. As I have argued thus far, the Protectorate was not simply run by a colonial administration, but a homosocial administration. Legislative endeavours could not but be inflected by this.

The Protectorate first moved to legislatively address adultery in 1919 (1804/25), making its discursive invocation an occurrence of the 1920s and 30s. I do not think it coincidental that this was also the period when native insanity entered court records. It marked a shift to more determinedly sophisticated understandings of the native, and the development of increasingly biopolitical modes of management. As Chapter Three demonstrated, natives faced increasing administrative interrogation. The administration wanted to know what the native did and thought, and then it wanted to stop him doing and thinking things it found objectionable.

The imperial regime referenced its perceptions of native custom and mentality in the creation of new legal codes. These perceptions



were often of questionable accuracy, and often self-serving (Schmidt 1990). Time and time again, adultery was blamed on women; the male native succumbing to adulterous feminine temptations. When D.O. Colin Wilson linked adultery to opportunities for women to stray in the absence of their labourer husbands (1153/26), there was no simultaneous consideration of the lack of shackles for the husbands. Most submissions on adultery legislation (detailed below) proceeded from an at least implicit understanding of the wronged party as male, and female inconstancy frequently was explicitly postulated. For example, the Bishop of Melanesia, John Mannering Steward, writing in 1926 and claiming to draw upon over twenty years experience, gave his opinion that the woman was to blame in the vast majority of cases, and advised:

Immediate steps should be taken to provide for the segregation of notoriously immoral women, who are always a source of great danger, especially to the young men, and frequently the source of adultery proceedings (2597/31).

In 1926, Kane painted a stroke of state ethnography across the gender question of adultery, claiming that '[t]he offence, in the native mind, is, if anything, considered the more serious on the part of the woman offender' (1153/26). Explicitly, he raised the issue of severity in native male eyes. Yet once again, native beliefs surface through the white masculine lens, and precisely the extent of any productive distortion remains a mystery. What is here most important about Kane's statement is its exposure of a European emphasis upon the gravity of female infidelity.

Pursuing intercourse outside the marital bed and actively seeking to fulfil her own desire, the adulterous woman foregrounded her sexuality. In British society, sexuality was relegated to the private

sphere (McLaren 1997), so that the woman who outwardly proclaimed her sexuality had fallen. The European male imaginary positioned exposed female sexuality as a potent threat, indeed, Tosh argues that nineteenth-century masculinity evidenced an 'almost morbid fear of women's sexuality' (2005:118). It was threatening particularly to masculine vitality, which was also at least partially affirmed by mastery over it (Levine 2003). In such a frightening sexual capacity, the native woman emerged from passivity to problematically confront white men. Of course, excluded from the homosocial regime, she did so as icon rather than agent.

In the 1938 Hauoto case, the defendant was accused of adultery with a married woman named Aesifua while her husband was away attending a burial feast. He blamed it all on her in his testimony:

This business was started by the woman AESIFUA. She spoke with me and we ran away together to my house. Before I had connection with this woman she said "Oh suppose you no have 'im me I think all same before, you can't kill 'im man (note by Court a native form of taunting a man.) I said, "Did she not want her husband as she was a married woman?" I am a single man myself. This is all I want to say (1627/38, emphasis in original).

For this, his second offence,<sup>4</sup> Hauoto was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment, which was reduced on review to six months.

An apparent quirk of the Protectorate's dealings with native adultery was that, even though women were blamed, it was native men, like Hauoto, who were prosecuted and punished. Figures given by Sandars for Malaita in the 1930s indeed show a preponderance of convictions against males – a ratio of 3.14:1 over a four year period (2597/31). This illustrates a curious colonial assignment of roles in which native men must be protected from the chaos wrought by the offences of loose native women, and yet the solution found is to punish

native men. In a 1932 letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Fletcher reported:

Mr. Ashley agreed that the women were largely to blame. [But] He confirmed the statement that only the men were punished, it being impracticable, in the absence of female prisons, to incarcerate the women (2597/31).

This was about much more than prisons. If the government had really required, there would have been nothing preventing arrangements for incarcerating female convicts. They already did in extreme cases,<sup>5</sup> and on occasion appointed (native) female 'wardresses' to care for them (e.g., 859/24, 1756/39). When the Protectorate wanted funding for a new project, they clamoured for it from the High Commission. It is somewhat duplicitous, then, to suggest that the government were regretfully 'making do' by restricting punishment to men.

Rather, the predominant punishment of men was not, as first seems, an oddity, but a homosocial measure. Homosocial governance manifested through an enforcement of civilisational norms upon native *men*. Punishing men for what was simultaneously labelled a female offence, made this operation particularly clear. It was about a greater willingness to engage with men, than to engage with women. Colonial homosociality demanded that women be excluded.

I suggest that the native man who fell prey to the wanton woman was imagined to do so not necessarily against his own better judgment, but against the better judgment of the Protectorate who judged for him. By succumbing to her beckoning, the native was perceived to have turned his back upon the Protectorate; his eagerness for the uncontrolled gratifications of raw sexuality, in preference to homosocial order, was a betrayal. When a native man fell for the embraces not just of any woman, but of the worst possible type of woman, then it was really he who had suffered the greater fall from grace.

In 1923-24 the administration specifically worked on a 'Draft Native Adultery Punishment Regulation' (190/23). Through regulation they sought to enshrine legal punishment for adultery, with the ultimate aim of discouraging offences. The original proposal stipulated that if a native committed adultery with another native and the aggrieved spouse laid a complaint, a penalty of either a £5 fine or three months imprisonment would be imposed. Six months imprisonment was prescribed for a second or subsequent offence. Complaints were to be laid via the local Headman or D.O. Only in the most acute cases of recidivism would adulterers be tried by the Tulagi court, therefore annexing adultery to D.O.s' local jurisdictions. Notable also is that the proposal was limited to instances between natives only.

The proposal was distributed to the various missions operating in the Solomons<sup>6</sup> requesting their feedback. It is significant that the government treated the missions as stakeholders since they were usually opposed rather than cooperating in harmony. Government ire was expressly directed towards the Methodist Mission led by Reverend John F. Goldie - 'the tactics of this gentleman and the trouble which he has caused are well known to the Colonial Office' (Kane, 48/23). Numerous spats between Goldie and government officials erupted over the years. One occurred when a Tongan missionary was convicted of adultery and Goldie had apparently attempted to have the record expunged. Criticising perceived interference by Goldie, Kane caustically dredged this up, writing:

it might therefore be suggested that the Reverend gentleman has sufficient employment in the guidance of the affairs of his own mission without arrogating to himself the guidance of Government officials for whom he is in no way responsible (1328/21).

Including the missions in discussion on the proposed legislation constituted in part recognition of their moral shepherding role, but not, as is evident, necessarily one that upheld it. In fact, the administration questioned and criticised the moral authority and standing of the missions more often than it supported it. Sandars, along with W.P.H.C. Chief Judicial Commissioner Vaskess, even went so far as to blame adultery on the missions themselves and to state that it was much more common among Christians than among pagans (2597/31).

The opinion of the missions was not sought because the administration considered them incontrovertible experts, and intended that their feedback be fully considered and heeded. It was after all being drawn into government representation; to be used or refused at government discretion. Unsurprisingly, the administration largely and immediately rejected Goldie's submitted recommendations, preferring to characterise the advice of the competing missions as much more relevant. In his written feedback on the proposed legislation, Goldie had stated that:

The old native custom in the Western Solomons was to punish the guilty woman by flogging (the flogging being administered by other women of the community) and the guilty man by death. Notwithstanding the fact that this method of punishment has not been possible for some years, the offence is not very prevalent in [the New Georgia group].

I would respectfully suggest that some form of punishment is necessary as a deterrent, but that (a) no action be taken unless a specific complaint is made by either the husband of the wife, (b) at first, at any rate, a fine can only be imposed (190/23, emphasis in original).

Goldie's confident declaration of the rarity of adultery in the New Georgia group can be easily imputed to a propagandist need to show the positive moral influence of his mission. He was certainly not the only

missionary to do so (e.g., Luxton 1955). Curiously, Goldie's description of pre-contact custom is at a considerable variance with the 'official' version promulgated by the administration, which labelled Malaita the sole region in which adultery was punishable by death. Notably also, his support for a fine is remarkably prescient given the turn of the 1930s, which I will shortly relate.

H.B.P. Wicks, of the Seventh Day Adventist Mission propounded a belief in a universal pre-contact death penalty, and went on to exhort the government to action:

The other extreme prevails at the present, there being no penalty which tends to a laxity of moral relationship, which, if once broken down – with the native race – will be impossible to re-establish. And – the native races here are looking to us (Europeans), because we will not countenance the old death penalty, and have not stated a suitable penalty from our way of thinking, and are beginning to believe that we condone this social evil (190/23).

Wicks wanted imprisonment for 'unregenerate' offenders, and Northcote Deck of the South Seas Evangelical Mission (S.S.E.M.) clearly fixated on what he saw as the necessity of punishment in all cases:

In the past, where natives have been punished for adultery, under the Pacific Order in Council<sup>7</sup> on the score of thereby producing a breach of the peace, the beneficial results of such punishment have been most marked and satisfactory and such punishment has undoubtedly had a strong deterrent effect (190/23).

The eventual Regulation was brought into legal force in 1924. It contained the original penalties the government had drafted and invited submissions on. The content of the mission submissions had therefore forced no change to the government's formulation. Goldie excepted, the missions had overwhelmingly come out in support of direct judicial punishment for adultery.

It was not just on personality that Goldie's feedback was discarded, but also because he had failed to lend full agreement to the impetus for active intervention by instead characterising adultery as rare and therefore of little immediate import. Perhaps then Goldie actually reigned supreme as the most accomplished mission propagandist, for, if the rival missions so actively lusted after government intervention, the impression given was that they were clearly not doing as well as he as moral shepherds! It may not be too fanciful to imagine government glee – this was after all the time of the administration led by Kane, who appeared in full bluster in Chapter Three – at realising that not only could it proceed with the blessing of the missions, but that their support came at the price of an implicit admittance of their failure at moral leadership. At any rate, the Regulation effectively annexed a slice of the mission's moral pie. The new mandate to deal with adultery gave the administration a larger territory upon which to play out homosociality, comfortably legally encoded and freed from meddling missionaries.

But such was not to be. In 1926, just two years later, the administration found itself so pestered by calls from both natives (more precisely, officially appointed native headmen) and missionaries to increase the provisions for penalties that it launched a systematic review of the regulation's operation. Writing to the High Commissioner to initiate the review, Kane summarised information given to him by D.O. Bell and representatives of the S.S.E.M. specifically regarding the Regulation's operation in Malaita. He wrote:

in the opinion of both natives and Europeans ... the present punishment is not sufficiently severe to act as a deterrent for an offence formerly punishable by death ... as a consequence, the former high moral standard amongst the natives of this large and populous island ... is being seriously affected (1153/26).

In contrast to opinions held by missionaries like Goldie and Wicks, state ethnography placed Malaita as the only region in which native custom prescribed the death penalty for adultery. In part, this could be attributed to representations of Malaita as 'notoriously the most troublesome island in the group', whence came the Protectorate's worst savages (214/19). This characterisation is oft repeated (Bennett 1987, Keesing and Corris 1980, Laracy and Laracy 1980), but it was also a schizophrenic one. Natives of Vella Lavella and New Georgia were forerunners for the title during the outrage period, and in the twentieth century Choiseul, home of the famous Liliboi (Chapter Five), was considered an 'administrative no-man's land' to which civilisation, law and order were entirely foreign (1160/27, 2405/23). Different regions found themselves clothed with civility and just as quickly stripped back to native barbarism in accordance with the representative demands of the issue at hand.

The review process was not a swift one. It took three years for an eventual amendment, doubling both the fine and term of imprisonment. The intervening 'Malaita massacre' in 1927 (Keesing and Corris 1980) contributed to the delay since resources were diverted into military operations. But, if anything, it also kept up the imperative to tackle the review. Post-1927, there was significant sensitivity to the strength of administrative authority on Malaita. In a 1928 letter to the High Commissioner, Kane mapped a direct link between the judicial punishment of adultery and anti-government sentiment:

since the outrage on Malaita ... a contributory cause to alleged native dissatisfaction with the Government on Malaita is the ineffectiveness of the light penalty at present imposed for the offence of adultery (1153/26).

High Commissioner Hutson reacted to Kane's concerns by promptly writing to the Secretary of State for the Colonies and explaining that the



1924 Regulation was 'regarded by the natives of Malaita as a wholly inadequate and inefficient substitute' for the customary death penalty (1153/26). If adultery penalties were bothering the Malaitans, then the government would get bothered about adultery penalties.

But were Malaitans really about to coalesce in anti-government defiance because the fine for adultery was £5 rather than £10? Archival records certainly give this impression, but they are the voices of white men, not of Malaitans. The administrative characterisation of Malaita as the sole region in which the most ultimate of punishments had been customarily imposed for adultery, created a contrast between calls for judicial stringency there and lenience in the remaining islands. This was most certainly in keeping with the climate of opinion surrounding the events of 1927. It was declared legally infeasible to make an amendment dealing solely with Malaita, but Hutson's solution was to list the new doubled penalty as a maximum available to court discretion, and to have instructions issued to D.O.s specifying that the upper limit was *only* to apply to Malaita. Whether or not the Malaita natives had actually agitated for more stringent penalties, what resulted was an increase in government punitive powers at precisely the same time as Malaita had been propelled into the spotlight through a resurgence of outrage mythology.

As part of the review, D.O.s' were instructed to provide feedback. This time it was the men administering the law, rather than the missions, who were considered the primary knowledge-holders in the field. Colin Wilson, posted to Guadalcanal, feared that the Regulation did not make provision for cases involving husbands absent on labour plantations:

While the husband is still on the plantation the wife misconducts herself with someone in the village. These

cases are invariably reported to the headman, but ... I am unable to do more than tell the Headman to inform the husband on his return and then if he wishes, to bring the case before the Court. Upon the husband finding out the state of affairs on his return, there is generally trouble (1153/26).

He went on to suggest that the solution was to allow the headman to bring the woman up on charges, rather than operating the law solely on the basis of the aggrieved husband's complaint. In effect, he advocated an increase in the powers of administrative scrutiny. Headmen were in the main government informants – they were, after all, appointed to their posts by the local D.O., to whom they reported (228/19). Wilson's vision lifted responsibility for the reporting of adultery from the family unit. It should not be forgotten that under the Regulation as it stood, natives still had the option of withholding jurisdiction over their sexual and marital lives from the government since the aggrieved spouse had the choice to either report or not report the infidelity of his or her marital partner. Wilson's scheme, under the banner of averting trouble and protecting the absent plantation labourer's interests, would reconfigure the Regulation's opt-in nature. By endowing the headman with the ability to bring charges, it brought the government into the deepest intimacy with the native.

This was the same Wilson who, in 1925, had been so vehemently painted by MacQuarrie as the bogeyman of the Protectorate. Kane, who had then defensively sided with Wilson, later claimed him to be:

A thoroughly conscientious and capable officer who takes a keen interest in his work and has been particularly successful in native administration (3 II 83/28).

That Kane was perhaps guilty of praise more glowing than deserved is indicated by Hutson's comments, appended to the same report:

Mr. Wilson should in time become a good Officer, but he requires supervision and guidance. He is a bit inclined to 'rush his fences' (3 II 83/28).

In the 1930 reports on officers, Ashley (newly appointed to the post of Resident Commissioner and desperate to shake things up) was decidedly lukewarm:

His records show him to be an officer of little energy and no imagination. Like most other officers here he has had no training as a District Officer. His routine work is satisfactory (3 II 25/30).

In 1927, and with a reputation for toughness when it came to putting down native dissent (Keesing and Corris 1980), Wilson had been given the leadership of the punitive column that descended on Malaita. For this he had won praise and further support from Kane (3 II 10/28), in part due to his apparent efforts at restraining the Australian volunteers who spoilt for a fight against the natives (Keesing and Corris 1980).

Under the tutelage of Kane, Wilson was clearly cemented as a core member of the Resident Commissioner's most loyal cadre. He had only been a fully-fledged D.O. since 1923 (although served before this), but had rapidly been drawn into the inner sanctum. Tough when it came to natives, favoured by Kane, and closely aligned to the workings of government power, it was little wonder that Wilson would emerge as a keen advocate of the further extension of that power. What we do not know from the archive is whether Wilson was aware of rumours that he himself was a cuckold.

Wilson further claimed that '[t]hese cases lead to a great deal of trouble, and, in one case at least, has led to a tragedy' (1153/26). He imagined the labouring man coming home at the conclusion of his plantation contract and, finding that his wife had not remained faithful, reacting violently. Effectively then, he saw the government as

punitively capable of assuaging the husband's rage. This is a telling connection because if a woman's infidelity could provoke her husband's violent anger, it is difficult to envisage legal punishment as emotionally calming - after all, it would not erase the act. Illustrated by his later actions on Guadalcanal and Malaita, Wilson was not one to countenance native violence; and he was an acknowledged upholder of the power of government intervention.

Homosociality played a further role. It excluded women, who, it will be seen, for their involvement in adultery, were cast as villains waylaying men from the true path. Lamenting the predicament of the homeward-bound cuckolded labourer, Wilson cast the government as the reliable benefactor, diligently upholding native male rights in contrast to the fickle behaviour of the unfaithful wife. Implicitly, perhaps, the grateful native would therefore be well advised to turn his loyalty to the government who had so assisted him, rather than to the wicked woman who had not cared a jot.

As Wilson's comments indicate, adultery could be viewed as a cause of unrest and an incendiary for violence. Judicial Commissioner de Heveringham made a similar representation. Discussing Court practices in an appended minute he indicated that:

I take it that the object of the Regulation is to prevent possible breaches of the peace arising out of acts of adultery rather than to enforce a moral code. Personally, I never inflict a heavy sentence for adultery unless the prosecution can give some evidence that, owing to native feeling, a breach of the peace might have resulted (1153/26).

Here he downgraded the moral dimension of adultery, instead linking its policing to the government's role as defender of law and order. As the Protectorate's foremost legal authority, it is not greatly surprising that he viewed the Regulation in terms of the judicial rather than the

moral. His concern with keeping the peace did however align him with Wilson.

Murder cases heard at Tulagi often arrived there from beginnings blamed on an act of adultery. In 1939, for example, Arisikwa of Malaita appeared before the court charged with murdering his wife. The witness who had discovered her corpse described:

There was a wound, with bone broken, just below the left temple. There was another wound at the back of the skull. There were traces of blood. There was a rope round the neck, cutting into it. It was knotted at the back of the neck (1777/39).

Called to give testimony, Arisikwa explained that:

I killed my wife because she was with Oleka. I saw Oleka and my wife in the scrub. I had no knife then. I saw them having [sexual] connection. Oleka had a knife, and I was frightened and went back to my house. I wanted to kill my wife, but I thought I'd wait till I got them together and then I'd kill both (1777/39).

In Chapter Three, I noted how discussions of insanity increased in court cases as time went on. This was a case very late in the period under focus, and a considerable discussion of Arisikwa's mental state was appended to the trial notes. The following exchange occurred between Ragnar Hyne and medical officer James Turner:

Q. [by Hyne] Supposing a man such as the accused caught his wife having sexual intercourse with another man, what effect would such conduct have on such a person's mind?

A. [by Turner] It would depend on the previous stability of his mind. If he were of an excitable temperament, the actual seeing of such a happening might plunge him into a temporary state of insanity immediately.

[Turner notes that insanity would be of very short duration, to which Hyne queries the possibility of 'brooding']

Q. Would in your opinion such brooding result in such a defect of reason that a person would not know the nature

and quality of the act he was committing, or not know what he was doing was wrong.  
A. It might (1777/39).

Other witnesses appeared and were interrogated regarding Arisikwa's mental state. From this, Hyne concluded that he had a prior history of periodic mental derangement. Not only his wife's infidelity, but actually witnessing it, had provoked Arisikwa into an act of bloody violence. He was consequently detained as a criminal lunatic. The smashed skull and garrotting of the unfaithful woman show the violence adulterous acts could provoke and, importantly, Turner's testimony discloses a belief in the inciting force of infidelity. Indeed, the exchange shows that Hyne had even pressed Turner towards that conclusion, so that his testimony met a preconceived expectation.

Interestingly, High Commissioner Hutson argued the opposite, stating that 'I am not satisfied that there is sufficient evidence available to show that this ill-feeling has ever given rise to actual breaches of the peace' (1153/26). Adultery could spark anger and emotion, yes; but violence? That much, he implied, was only in the European imagination. Imaginations like that of Wilson, whose own wife's behaviour had been called into question; and Kane, whose marital difficulties were well-known to the High Commission (3 II 20/1923).

While tougher penalties were brought in, the legislation still remained unsatisfactory and contentious because, again, during the 1930s, the government undertook another review. Tweaking the Regulation seemed to have become irresistible. The most remarkable feature of the proposed changes this time around (and here the prescience of Goldie's earlier statement emerges) was that it sought to make adultery a civil rather than criminal offence, punishable only by compensation to the

injured party. Remembering that the government's initial response to Goldie's preference for compensation had been to cast it off as unhelpful, if not preposterous, this was a significant about-face.

Again provided by D.O.s, the feedback on this occasion helps explain why the government could contemplate such a drastic step. J.K. Brownlees, in the Eastern Solomons, favoured the change, noting:

A married woman is here regarded as the property of her husband. Should a third party have connection with her he commits a trespass against the husband and the latter is entitled to compensation. This is and always has been the native view (2597/31).

Once again state ethnography spills forth as the propulsion for judicial change. Where the emphasis on taming Malaita had previously silenced competing delineations of custom in other districts, in the 1930s these found their voice through the usual sages of native custom, white men. Brownlees went on to express grave concern about how the Regulation, as it stood, was operating:

The position today is as follows: the offender is nearly always asked to make compensation to the wronged person, failing which he is told that he will be taken to Court and imprisoned. This verges very closely to the crime of obtaining ... money by a threat, and is a most undesirable state of affairs (2597/31).

Far from stopping undesirable behaviour, he argued, the Regulation was actually causing crime! An allegation that the legal system was open to manipulation was a strong argument in favour of change.

L.W.S. Wright, stationed on Guadalcanal, also agreed that the Regulation was not wholly suited to conditions in his district. He gave the following summation:

When the Regulation was first made the natives seemingly thought that adultery had been made a crime like murder which must be reported to and punished by the Government. Since it became understood that it is an

offence only on complaint, all cases are disposed of in the villages by compensation in more or less the ancient fashion (2597/31).

This is an interesting account when it is realised that Guadalcanal was previously the stomping ground of an officer who had emerged with particularly strong views during the first review, Colin Wilson. He had clamoured for a Regulation that essentially supported the right of the government to pry into the sexual lives of all of its native subjects and to punish infidelity without an initiating spousal complaint. Perhaps, then, the situation described in Wright's first sentence was no coincidence. It requires little stretch of the imagination to see Wilson encouraging natives to conform exactly to his very vision of government intervention.

Coming from Ysabel, a similar argument regarding the customary role of compensation was put forward by District Officer W. Fowler. He supported the institution of a damages-only regulation because

the fundamental element of the ancient remedy against adulterers would be preserved; i.e. an award of compensation by which a wronged and sensitive person would have something to fortify himself against the contempt and scorn of his fellow men (2597/31).

Not only did Fowler add more weight to this new definition of custom, competing as it was with Malaita's death penalty, it brought in that most important of concepts: masculinity. Whereas earlier Wilson and de Heveringham had evoked the spectacle of the wronged and enraged husband asserting his masculinity in violent style, Fowler asserted something quite different. For him, the wronged husband was the object of scorn, a man to be looked upon in disgust, so unworthy in fact that he even lacked the ability to take vengeance. Unable to either keep a woman or enact violence, the only way he could regain any semblance of face would be through a monetary award.



But whatever had happened to Malaita? With its death penalty and desire for judicial rigour, Malaita had previously been the focus of the adultery Regulation. Now in charge of Malaita was Eustace Sandars, notable as Commander of the Armed Constabulary cum District Officer. In an extensive submission, Sandars ruminated on conditions in the district. His purpose seemed to be twofold – firstly to offer an interpretation of Malaitan custom and, secondly, to address mission influence. The crux of his argument was that:

Things have changed now, not so much through the Government's arrival, as through the influence of the Mission societies. When the Government has strictly upheld all proper and ancient native custom the morals of the pagan have suffered very little. The substitution of the Adultery Regulation and imprisonment in the place of native execution has of course tended to make morals no better, but generally speaking, the morals of the pagan are better than those of the Christian (2597/31).

Positioning missionaries as degrading rather than improving native morality contested their credentials, and in so doing inferred Protectorate governance as preferential. It revisited and reinforced the initial 1923 desire to assert a government warrant for the policing of adultery.

Continuing, Sandars raised the issue of corporal punishment, a not an unfitting consideration for a man of martial bent. He stated:

In my opinion the only thing which would definitely stop adultery is corporal punishment, and that I most emphatically do not advocate though certain Missionaries seem to be strongly in favour of it (2597/31).

Certain missionaries like Deck of the S.S.E.M., who expressed the opinion to the Resident Commissioner:

I am sure that corporal punishment would bring immorality to an end in a very short time. It sounds

severe, yet it would be kindness in the ultimate effect (2597/31).

The Solomons in the 1930s were still the Solomons of disciplinarian plantation overseers (Chapter Five). They were still the Solomons of the simple native seen as responding to direct punishment. And, they were certainly still the Solomons where a native would be flogged under 'nuisance to female' legislation (Chapter Five). Sandars had for a time served as Superintendent of Prisons (1704/30), and it is quite probable that he had even been involved in the administration of a flogging. He acknowledged the correctional power of physical punishment, yet it is difficult to know why he blanched from putting it into practice. Nevertheless, he took the opportunity to contrast his own opinion with that of the missions, whom he certainly did not hold in high regard.

Sandars did not support the idea of damages as a remedy in Malaita, noting that 'definite punishment' was the only way of dealing with adultery in the district. Damages, for Fowler the last-chance redeemer of some semblance of masculinity, Sandars instead perceived as the fast track to divorce. W.H Miller in the Shortlands was in agreement. He explained that:

I have spoken to a number of the old men of the district on the subject of damages and they are of opinion that it would not be good to introduce this. They consider that the woman would think herself bought and paid for and so at liberty to misconduct herself again whenever she chose (2597/31).

This is a wonderful example of homosociality in action. Miller wanted to know what the natives thought of the adultery Regulation ... so he asked a group of elder males. Hardly a representative sample, but nevertheless exactly the demographic to which colonialists often turned for 'native opinion' (Schmidt 1990). An opinion all the more likely to be embraced when it had elicited (or the white voice perceived it to have

elicited) such a characterisation of the unfaithful woman as prostitute, a beloved smear tactic, as I earlier indicated, for an administration keen to position itself as the true relationship partner for the native man.

Competing voices had been raised against the judicial dominance of the Malaita model, but ultimately opinions were split. In 1935 Vaskess concluded that there was no alternative but to leave the law in its present state. This did not stop the Protectorate officers from determinedly tinkering with it though. Adultery was a much too addictive subject for that! But in 1939, the categorical order to stop fiddling flowed down from the High Commissioner, who advised the Resident Commissioner that the draft changes to the legislation were not to be proceeded with. By 1940, when this study ends, no change had been made to the adultery Regulation.

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> To this school in Fiji went the young native and 'half-caste' boys destined to become Native Medical Practitioners in the Solomons.

<sup>2</sup> While I will not address it here, Collinson's portrayal is also in contrast to what scholars identify as the typical representation of Melanesian female ugliness – see, for example, Jolly 1997.

<sup>3</sup> A pun not unintended. Charles Workman was forced to resign from the position of Resident Commissioner after a scandalous incident involving the young wife of an acquaintance (1284/19, 3 II 140/20); and the vengeful MacQuarrie attempted to tar Richard Rutledge Kane with a similar brush, alleging a scandal with D.O. Colin Wilson's wife (Chapter Three).

<sup>4</sup> Not with the same woman.

<sup>5</sup> Such as the intriguing case of 'half-caste' Enid Bennett, imprisoned for burglary while heavily pregnant (3683/31).

<sup>6</sup> This included the Methodist, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Seventh Day Adventist and South Seas Evangelical missions.

<sup>7</sup> I have been unable to ascertain the scope of this order, or indeed to which it refers. Laracy and Laracy (1980) note 1893 and 1907 Orders in Council governing marriages.



Figure 5.1. Liliboi (218/19).

## Chapter Five

### Specimens of Manhood (*And Tropes of White Womanhood*)

The Island of Guadalcanar... will never become really popular with white women, because there are some gigantic rats there which climb trees.

- Clifford Collinson (1926:24).

The Empire ... occupied an unprecedented place in the masculine imagination ... where male comradeship and male hierarchies found their full scope, free from feminine ties.

- John Tosh (1991:67-68).

At Manning Straits in 1927, plantation overseer John Cameron tried to exert discipline by shouting and swearing at a labourer, Gousie. With Gousie responding aggressively and 'shaping up for a fight' (3423/27), Cameron made a hasty retreat. But he evidently took no caution from the incident for, two days later, he angrily objected to the amount of work that Gousie had done:

He proceeded to strike Gousie on the back of the neck with a loa-cane he was carrying. He drew blood with the blow ... [Gousie then] picked up a stone which he threw at deceased ... He missed. Deceased then started to chase Gousie. They both started picking up stones and hurling them at each other ... one of Gousie's stones hit deceased on the chest and knocked him over. Gousie rushed up and took the axe out of his hand. He was in a semi-recumbent position. He said to Gousie "You kill'm me die now." Gousie proceeded to split his head open with the axe (3423/27).

While his rather graphic demise symbolised the risks Europeans could face in working with native labourers, his disciplinarian actions leading up to it also illustrates how routinised violence on plantations could be. After the outrages, and indeed after government attention had shifted to

violence between natives, plantations remained the last bastion of frequent violent incidents between European men and native men. Curiously, in the European imaginary, these indentured men were not men, but boys.

This chapter differs somewhat from those previous to it. Unlike the three core chapters which have each pivoted upon a central theme – outrages, the judiciary, adultery – I consider here a cluster of material, at first glance disparate. Labourers termed ‘boys’ amid endemic plantation violence, a heroic Choiseul chief, one District Officer up on assault charges and another threatening to ‘go native’, and then the white women who have rarely been admitted to the archive’s pages. In bringing all of this together I make a close reading of masculinity and homosociality. Previous chapters have illustrated how different personalities, from Thurston and Tryon through to Kane, MacQuarrie, and Wilson, contributed to developing homosociality and debated its maintenance. As a relational principle, homosociality was open to dispute, interpretation and reinterpretation. I will continue in a similar vein, but with a slightly reoriented approach to individuals, examining those cast as specimens of manhood to show how their actions, and how those actions were represented, are indicative of Protectorate homosociality’s endorsed values and prohibitions. These entailed a prescription of who could participate in the homosocial relationship, and how to do so appropriately. This finally leads me to white women, and I look at how they were cast by such relational dictates, moulding administrative reactions to their presence and absence.

Homosociality emerged from the initial masculine confrontation of the outrage period. The foundational tropology continually reproduced native men as head-hunters and cannibals. Such a thoroughly

masculine suffusion prevented Solomon Islander men being portrayed as effeminate, unlike other colonial men, such as Bengalis (Sinha 1995). When reduction did occur it was not to femininity but to boyhood (Thomas 1992, 1994), a generational delineation that appeared at certain discursive points and highlighted native masculinity's inferiority in comparison to that of white men. 'Boys' were particularly those natives recruited for labour; that is, subjugated to European employers. In the act of becoming closer to white ideals through participation in the economy and the capitalist ideology of work and discipline, native men were, paradoxically, placed conceptually further away from full male maturity. But this was a Peter Pan story in which they could never grow up. As they could never actually *be* white, the attainment of the white masculine standard was closed off to them.

The other effect of the characterisation was that it worked to assuage European fears of the potential enactment of violent masculinity in natives who were brought into close proximity to them (recalling the dangers of the outrage period). Boys could be controlled, taught, and disciplined, and so the evocation of boyhood elided the ability of native men to harm white men in the colonial imaginary.

Yet, the plantations were the prime site for violent confrontations between Europeans and natives. Incidents of labour violence, ranging from simple cases of assault, to bloody murders like that of John Cameron, were not infrequent (Bennett 1987). Breckenridge (1998) identifies capacity for violence as a fundamental shared element of masculinity in the encounter between white overseers and black labourers in the South African goldmines of this same period. Also in relation to Africans in European employ, David Killingray writes:

ideas of racial superiority and modern discipline were closely related; both had to be upheld and advanced not

only by example and direction but also when necessary by curt correction .... Physical pain was regarded as a salutary means of dealing with offence, the short sharp stick that would punish, discourage, and, pre-eminently, provide a warning to other offenders (1994:202-203).

In the Solomons too, direct discipline was a recognised way of dealing with native labourers.

On a Pacific copra plantation, as in the mines of South Africa, the white male was outnumbered by native employees. He had to establish himself through physical prowess (Breckenridge 1998). Plantation overseer Eric Glasson, for example, was described as 'a heavily-built, powerful looking man, weighing in the region of fourteen stone' (1437/18). In 1918, Glasson faced trial, having apparently administered such a heavy and brutal beating to a labourer in his charge that the victim died.<sup>1</sup> Many non-official white residents saw this and similar prosecutions as an indignity that broke racial ranks. Responding to the Maxwell case of 1922, in which the accused was confined to his boat pending trial for the manslaughter of a labourer, the *Planters' Gazette* complained:

And we talk glibly of the necessity of maintaining the white man's prestige before the aboriginal races! Shall we do so by permitting one of our countrymen to be subjected to disgraceful and degrading public exhibition? .... What anguish did that man endure in being daily pointed out to white men and natives as a murderer? (1351/22).

They defended the right of the European to defend himself against the native, fearing that judicial punishment of white overseers would encourage native labourers to misbehave.

Already bitter about being held legally responsible, plantation overseers further claimed that native assaults against themselves were treated, judicially, with less seriousness than assaults on government



staff. This was probably true. Lever's manager C.V. Widdy in 1938 angrily declared to the Resident Commissioner:

unless a more serious view is taken by the Administration for offences of the nature of which we complain, we can no longer answer for actions our plantation staff may be compelled to adopt in order to protect themselves from injury at the hands of natives under their control (1104/38).

Not only did Widdy assert the right of the overseer to use force, he downright threatened the government with it.

In government eyes, planters formed an underclass in contrast to their own imperially mandated authority and resultant status (Bennett 1987, Boutilier 1984). They emerge in archival representations as coarse men in a harsh industry. Images of planter mistreatment of native men and attachments to native women appear as antithetical to administrative, homosocial, priorities.

Those natives who did not take up positions on the copra industry's illusory teleology were not boys, but remained men. This was particularly so when they acted in ways reminiscent of the outrage period. For example, the perpetrators of the 1927 killings at Malaita (Keesing and Corris 1980) were certainly not portrayed as boys.

Nor was the chief Liliboi, lauded as 'Quite the finest native I have met in the Solomons' by Resident Commissioner Charles Workman in 1918 (218/19). Hailing from Choiseul, and extending his influence into Vella Lavella, Liliboi was a famed personage of the time, noted for his capable leadership, bravery, and fighting abilities. Seemingly exuding a heroic magnetism, he was referred to frequently in government correspondence, and stories about him were dramatically immortalised in print by contemporary authors like Collinson (1926) and Luxton

(1955). He attained a fascinating level of heroism in government eyes, especially since he continued to conduct inter-tribal feuds, which had been criminalised by the Protectorate. Something about Liliboi made him appear attractively endearing rather than destructively criminal.

In 1918/19, Choiseul had not come under the same stringent level of government control as most other islands. It was portrayed as still in the wild, savage state that naval commanders had encountered thirty or forty years earlier. Liliboi was locked in a long-running feud with another chief called Lakiti (218/19). Liliboi had attracted a significant political following, and was said to command at least 200 armed men. Administrative hopes were pinned upon bringing pacification and control to Choiseul by ending the feud, and Government Surveyor Stanley Knibbs met with Liliboi in September 1918 to implore him to cease hostilities:

I explained to him ... what was the purpose of the Government. He then said that this was quite different to what he had previously heard of the Government. He had looked upon it as being merely hostile, and a thing to be avoided (218/19).

Knibbs' caring government articulates with the emergent post-outrage growth of homosociality. Attempting to draw Choiseul into this relationship made Liliboi a key figure to win over. He emerged in preference to Lakiti, since, as Knibbs continued:

Lakiti was that chief who [the previous year] sent an insolent challenge to the District Officer at Gizo to come and fight him if he were game enough. The Choiseul natives believe that Government to be insufficiently powerful to take hostile action against them, and the non-acceptance of Lakiti's challenge has apparently furthered this belief. I find it difficult to convince the natives that the reason is the unwillingness of the Government to shed blood (218/19).

Of course, this was before the resurgence of the punitive outrage model in 1927, and Protectorate emphasis was on benevolently winning natives over rather than forcing their capitulation. Liliboi's willingness to give Knibbs a peaceful audience meant he compared favourably to Lakiti's anti-government aggression. He gained iconic status because he occupied the point where intervention could most likely occur. Therefore, he had to be looked after rather than vilified. Indeed, Workman spelt this out clearly after his own meeting with Liliboi the following month, declaring that 'He might be useful to Government if its authority were established on Choiseul' (218/19).

In 1919, Liliboi met his violent death during an attack on a rival village. As recounted by Luxton:

At dawn ... Liliboe [sic] and his warriors crept up on the village ... There was no one to be seen. The scouts knew the custom of the village and believed the people were gathered in the church for morning prayer. Assuming that all the fighting men were there, Liliboe directed his attack against the church and ordered his warriors to fire their rifles through the leaf walls of the building. The morning stillness was shattered by the roar of the volley that was fired.

But the church was empty ... the call to worship had not been sounded, and not one villager was injured. From behind a breastwork a man fired point-blank at Liliboe, who fell mortally wounded. Three other chiefs and two warriors were also shot, and the rest of Liliboe's warriors immediately fled (1955:87).

Of course Liliboi's tale here is not so much his own as it is a tale belonging to the colonialist men who narrated it, evoking his celebrity for their own ends. In his account, Collinson centralised his own masculine prowess. Shortly after Liliboi's death, Collinson visited the fateful village. Where Luxton portrays it as a dutiful mission village,

Collinson writes of a fortified stronghold. He narrates his encounter with the village headman:

Ongeli was so pleased with his victory, that ... he told us all about it in considerable detail, and at the end of the recital, he insisted on showing us the shallow grave, just within the walls of the village, where reposed the remains of Liliboi ... Quite thoughtlessly, but rather foolishly as it turned out, I suggested to Ongeli that it would be rather sporting of him to give me Liliboi's skull as a little souvenir of the occasion ... there was a good deal of chattering and argument about it, and I gathered that my suggestion did not meet with his approval. So I compromised by taking the axe<sup>2</sup> which killed Liliboi.

But it appears that I had misjudged old man Ongeli, because, just as we were making ready to depart, he slipped away, and presently returned with the head of poor old Liliboi stuck on the end of a spear.<sup>3</sup> Now, six weeks is not a long time to have been dead, but the savage ants of the tropics are quick workers, and therefore it was a skull rather than a head that Ongeli brought to me (1926:178-179).

'Foolishly as it turned out' indeed, because the removal of Liliboi's head by Collinson triggered a major scandal.

While he is evacuated from Collinson's account, archival correspondence penned by both the administration and the Methodist Mission, indicate that the Reverend Goldie was present during the visit. Indeed, he seems to have actively assisted in Collinson's acquisition of the head. When officials learnt of this exploit, they were incensed, and Collinson was eventually forced to return the head, which he had intended to take back to England as a curiosity. Goldie was, to the evident delight of Kane, ridiculed for 'admitted ghoulish proclivities' (1328/21).

In correspondence on Choiseul there is a full-body photograph of Liliboi (Figure 5.1.). This is an image of a bare-chested muscular man, in soldierly pose and staring directly at the camera. The implication of the

photograph's inclusion is that the recipient was not only being told of Liliboi's fine-ness, but being encouraged to look and see for himself, an exhortation to gaze at a masculine native body. Clay (2005) argues that missionaries to New Ireland viewed the unclothed male body as a visibly symbolic threat of violence. Through the outrage mythology and conceptions of masculine capacity, the Protectorate administration also associated violence with male bodies. However, with Liliboi's celebrity positioned as great hope, the image connoted not threat but admiration.

The consequent removal of Liliboi's head by Collinson and Goldie fits into Kelly's (1997) elaboration of the idea of 'grasp' alongside gaze. I suggest it is unsurprising that with such urgings to feast one's eyes upon this 'fine' male specimen, the ultimate expression of this came in the physical possession of his skull. Gazed possession begat grasped possession. While the government acted to repatriate Liliboi's remains to Choiseul, they too were drawn into it through their laudatory sentiments regarding him. No less than it was a curio for Collinson, the disembodied head provoked discursive opportunities for the administration.

Where Liliboi was cast as a hero, District Officer Francis Filose, stationed on Ysabel from 1927, looms as an antihero. Kane's confidential reports on officers, submitted in 1928, say of Filose that 'when first appointed he promised well but has been somewhat of a disappointment', a letdown Hutson attributed to his 'weak character' (3 II 83/28). In 1930, Ashley found his work 'satisfactory', but added that he had no innate aptitude for the job (3 II 25/30). By the next year, however, Ashley was distinctly dissatisfied; his negative assessment noted the contribution of health difficulties and domestic problems to Filose's poor performance (237/32). Things considerably worsened in 1932. Filose experienced a

nervous breakdown and was sent on three months leave after a medical report declared him unfit for active service and suffering from chronic malaria (3786/32). But that was not all. In December of that year Jack Barley, acting as Resident Commissioner,<sup>4</sup> transmitted the following urgent telegram to the High Commissioner:

Owing to disquieting reports concerning thrashings administered to number of native labourers at Russell Islands and Ysabel by orders from District Officer Filose ... [an investigation] reports that allegations relating to three cases involving eleven natives fully corroborated by native witnesses including police who administered punishment. It would also appear fines have been inflicted without proper trial .... Two serious charges at Ysabel including beating of native Headman not yet investigated. I have consulted Legal Adviser who suggests proceedings by committee enquire into Filose's conduct most suitable method of dealing with situation (3786/32).

At a judicial hearing, Filose was found guilty of nineteen charges of assault, electing to pay fines rather than face imprisonment. In May 1933, he was compulsorily retired from the colonial service and returned to England (584/33). As I will show, this episode was a slippage from the officially endorsed standards of white masculinity and as such a point of exposure, demonstrating its expressed limits and also prohibited extremes.

Filose's crime was to administer arbitrary judgment and unauthorised corporal punishment. He used the Ysabel native police contingent as henchmen, ordering them to carry out the punishments he prescribed, in one case with such brutality that the victim lost consciousness, and, was revived so that the beating could continue (584/33). In his defence, Filose blamed his actions on a nerve-shattering cocktail of illness and climate. Characterising his own condition, he placed violence as symptomatic of poor physical health.

In the Protectorate, admitting to suffering the feverish effects of tropical illness was socially acceptable. The use of anti-malarial quinine and government concern with hygiene measures like swamp reclamation (1209/21) and mosquito-proof rooms (1359/34) demonstrates an acknowledgement of the threat of disease, and its sufferance is shown in the official diaries of government officers and in requests to take leave in a more suitable climate (626/17, 1359/34). As such, illness was not a stigma, but merely served to confirm the geographic characterisation of the Solomons as an inhospitable frontier. 'Tropical Neurasthenia' was the contemporary name given to a plethora of symptoms said to manifest in European men in tropical climates:

Irritability, peevishness, troubled sleep, bad headaches, poor appetite, a lack of concentration, an inability to plan for the future, molehills become mountains, urgent matters are deferred indefinitely, and morbid introspection eventually prevails (Anderson 1997:132).

In the American Philippines, the focus of Anderson's study, tropical neurasthenia was represented as the weight of the white man's burden and in the first quarter of the twentieth century it was viewed as unfortunate, but understandable. Filose's explanation was an extreme version of this official portrayal. Drawing upon such medical logic, he argued that he had become so addled by fever he could hardly function.

However, despite having earlier credited his nervous breakdown, the administration was hesitant to accept his condition as reason for violence. The conclusions drawn on his medical certificates were challenged. Medical evidence in his favour was labelled legally inadmissible to the trial, although consent was given for him to elaborate on his condition (584/33). While he made his defence in the approved language of climate and illness, competing factors made his

arguments impossible to accept. Indeed, Barley was to label him 'pathological rather than normal' (584/33).

Interestingly, Judicial Commissioner Percy Hubbard noted that the floggings Filose ordered would not be reprehensible had they occurred under official judicial aegis. Protectorate law did in fact allow for corporal punishment, particularly in relation to 'nuisance to female' legislation. In 1923, Kane had ordered a supply of cat o' nine tails (for adults) and birch rods (for juveniles) from England (643/23, 644/23). The surrounding discussion referenced 1897 instructions from the then Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, on the nature of corporal punishment in the empire. Chamberlain had written:

The punishment gives little trouble, it is swift and severe, it bears a kind of testimony to the personal power and superiority of the official who awards it, and the more often it is inflicted, the more ready to disregard the pain and suffering which it involves, becomes the man who deals in this species of punishment (661/26).

Chamberlain's instructions counselled care in administering corporal punishment to guard against the development of extreme disciplinarians in colonial outposts. The Protectorate had not disregarded this, and was careful and measured in doling out physical punishment, administering it in controlled and medically-supervised circumstances. Furthermore, punishments were annually reported on to the Colonial Office. But, Filose had stepped outside of this and become the very man of whom Chamberlain warned.

It was not entirely the case that the perceived wrong of Filose's actions sprang from their lack of judicial endorsement. Reading government and masculinity together situates Filose's actions as challenging government-endorsed masculine restraint. During his term in office (coinciding with Filose's appointment), Ashley required that



government officials be 'temperate in their habits' (3 II 9/30, 25/30). Entering staff reports, this value constituted part of the official imagining of government masculinity, an ideal associated with correct and acceptable conduct 'on His Majesty's service' in the colonies. Representing the empire required upholding certain ideals of Britishness and of masculinity, and an officer was expected to embody and to exude both of these. Disconnecting himself from official judicial sanction though, Filose simultaneously disconnected from official masculine standards.

The disconnection was exacerbated by suspicions that Filose had aligned himself with other European residents in preference to the government. Barley noted

[had] a vote been taken amongst the European non-official residents of the [Protectorate] as to who was the most popular and efficient District Officer ... Filose would have polled at least 75 per cent of the votes (1064/33).

Continuing, he outlined what he perceived to be a fundamental division between non-official attitudes and administrative homosociality:

scarcely ten per cent of European settlers ... regard the native otherwise than as a "necessary evil" ... He is almost universally looked down upon as belonging to a somewhat unclean and definitely inferior order of creation, as one who does not know the meaning of gratitude, loyalty, or affection, and who will invariably mistake kindness for weakness and immediately take advantage of any person rash enough to trust him and treat him as a fellow human being. My personal experience of the natives ... has been the diametrical opposite (1064/33).

Filose had prescribed the beatings for plantation labourers, thereby leaning towards planter notions of physical discipline. The final charge against him was not for a flogging, but for an incident in which, presiding over a court case, he had leapt out of his seat and delivered kicks to the accused, Longava's, chin and groin, of such effect that

Longava involuntarily urinated (584/33). In January 1933 Barley, somehow, came across the case notes. They had never been submitted to Tulagi for review, and Barley even had difficulty working out which law Longava had been tried under (610/33). Filose had sentenced Longava to two years' imprisonment with hard labour for threatening bodily harm to a plantation overseer. Reviewing the case, Barley concluded that 'the notes of evidence do not substantiate in the very slightest the three charges' against Longava (610/33).

The incidents for which Filose was tried did not represent the totality of his violent behaviour. Many other occurrences were anecdotally reported by Barley, and also D.O. Sandars (1064/33). In one of these, aboard his boat,<sup>5</sup> Filose had complained that his native servant had not properly washed the pots. Flying into a rage, he threw the pots overboard and, the servant in after them. Appearing in the background of this account was the spectre of Mrs Filose. Barley wondered whether he or *she* had taken exception to the state of the pots, initiating the incident (1064/33).

Two images of Mrs Filose appear in the archive. Since her words and views never appear, these are instead images drawn by the men of the administration. In the first, she is aboard the launch, approving of her husband's enraged actions. Drawn into blame for the incident, the question hangs as to whether she was its propellant. This parallels, to an extent, the discourse in which blame for the worst excesses of colonial racism was attributed to white women, seen as goading their husbands to extreme views and behaviour (e.g., Boutilier 1984, Forster 1985 [1924], Inglis 1974). In the second image, Mrs Filose is a woman afraid, fleeing from his unpredictable violence (584/33). I suggest that while Filose still possessed respectable masculinity, his wife could be portrayed as pushing him to step outside its bounds, but this was no longer necessary

once he had been excised from government normality. With no hope of redemption, a redemptive excuse was unnecessary, and Filose's apparent poor treatment of his wife became further evidence of his depravity.

The image of Mrs Filose sparking the pot cleaning incident raises the issue of European women in the Solomons. They were certainly present (Boutilier 1984), but, as I will illustrate, they were, like native women, excluded from the colonial relationship. Stoler (2002, 1995) has written, with reference to the Dutch Indies, on the changing politics of allowing, excluding and expecting colonial wives. While her emphasis is somewhat different to my own, she draws together the male field of empire with colonial sexual management, indicating that marriage too was an issue to be negotiated in the colonies.

Most government officers in the Solomon Islands could expect to be provided with accommodation as a part of their remuneration. Lodgings were not, however, equal for all officers. One factor was hierarchy; the other major factor was marital status. This meant that whether accommodating an officer would also mean accommodating a wife, and possibly children, had to be taken into account. The married couple required space and privacy in a home of their own, so providing residences for married officers placed more strain on the government's limited housing resources than accommodating single men who were considered able to share a house, and do so with much less concern for its condition and furnishings.<sup>6</sup> By 1924 disquiet over quarters meant that the administration was exclusively looking to appoint single men to vacant positions (1823/24, 1824/24). Even an applicant who could arrange to accommodate his wife in Sydney was declined, ostensibly

because of a suspicion that he might change his mind and want quarters for her in the future (1824/24).

This of course begs the question as to how much this was *really* about quarters, and how much it was about debarring women full stop. The exclusion of women, or at least the desire to do so, appears as a broader colonial theme. In the 1897-98 Sudan campaign, Kitchener similarly refused to accept married officers (Tosh 2005). Representations of empire as a male field concurrently included concerns with keeping it that way. Examining Rudyard Kipling's colonialist literature, Arondekar identifies an imperial masculinity in which women were significantly removed from focus. Indeed, critical reception lauded its lack of what contemporaries referred to as "women-ridden-ness", and congratulated Kipling on having written about and for men. To be "women-ridden", Arondekar explains, was:

to hinder the true tales of empire by obstructing the flow of masculine representations with an extensive interest in female characters and emotions. Consequently, women need[ed] to be simply flattened out, reduced to one-dimensional characters who act as aesthetic foils to the machinations of the men in empire (2003:65-66).

In 1921, preparing for a return to his posting in the Gilbert Islands, Arthur Grimble worried about when and how he would get to see his wife and their four children, whom it had been decided, for health reasons, were not to accompany him. While still in England, he visited the Colonial Office to put these worries to a superior and try to gain reassurance. He reports being told, "We know nothing officially of wives and families in the Colonial Office ... We deal with officers in the field as officers, not husbands or fathers" (1957:3). Leaving his family in England, Grimble was not reunited with them for seven years.

Limits on the population of European women extended beyond housing, as Grimble's anecdote demonstrates. Tropical climate, considered unhealthy, malarial, and contrary to the conditioning of Europeans, was seen as even more so for women, whose biological delicacy compared unfavourably to male fortitude. Thus many wives of officers and non-officials resided in Sydney, which was easily accessible with regular steamer runs. Those who did cohabit with their husbands were frequently sent off on constitutional vacations to better climates (Luxton 1955), 2360/25). There are scant indications in the archive of the lives of European women, and men like MacQuarrie (1946) and Collinson (1926), who were not accompanied by wives, offer no glimpses of European women in their accounts either. While Boutilier (1984) offers an oral-historical account of eight women's experiences, archivally, at least, European women were consigned to the background, while their husbands got on with the business of administering empire.

There were two notable exceptions to the overwhelming physical absence of European women – the missionary sisters (Luxton 1955), and the wives of planters (Boutilier 1984). Luxton names exactly thirty sisters as having been employed by the Methodist Mission and residing in the Solomons at various periods between 1909 and 1940. Yet this is an exception that proves the rule because the government simply did not rate them a mention. If women could not be kept out, then the alternative, insofar as it was possible, was to resolutely ignore them.

Of course, this was not always possible. There were some instances in which white women's presence had to be acknowledged. One of these was in the development of 'nuisance to female' legislation, initiated not, as Laracy and Laracy (1980) assert, after the 1933 rape of two European women, but ten years earlier, when:

a native was convicted of being, at 2 a.m. in the bedroom of the Sister-in-charge of the hospital, and the sister awoke just in time to prevent this native from entering her bed [and] a native was found peering into a lady's bedroom while [she] was preparing to retire for the night (Kane, 644/23).

As Boutilier notes, most reported incidents were 'more frightening than serious' (1984:197), and it was a 'peeping Tom' rather than rape motif that structured legislative discussion (cf. Inglis 1974).

In this discussion, Secretary to the High Commissioner Roger Greene laid blame for native peeping Toms squarely at the feet of European women (644/23). He described them as, new to the Solomons, leaving the curtains open and undressing with a bright light on. Illuminated and exposed in the window, she invited attack through her own ignorance. This was his own hunch, extrapolated from Fijian 'experience' rather than based on evidence from the Solomons, but his description endorses the attack as a deserved punishment as it simultaneously deplores the offence.

This depiction coincides with Bataille's (1986) misogynistic diatribe in which all women are at heart prostitutes, all available for procurement at a certain price:

[Women] put themselves forward as objects for the aggressive desire of men ... prostitution is the logical consequence of the feminine attitude .... Prostitution proper only brings in a commercial element. .... a woman regards herself as an object always trying to attract men's attention. Similarly if she strips naked she reveals the object of a man's desire (1986:131).

The illuminated woman in a window, labelled as inviting attention, thus becomes complicit in her own defilement. Her negligent inability to draw the curtains makes her active rather than passive, deserving of punishment for her part in the crime. But here punishment and crime

are one. The ordeal of exposure to the black male gaze is meant to chastise the coquette within as much as it is seen as an act of inter-racial abhorrence.

The administration did not subscribe to an overwhelming view of the native man as a threatening sexual predator from whom white women had to be protected. Indeed, the resultant 1924 'nuisance to female' regulation was fundamentally used to punish teenage boys for peeping at native women.

While I might speculate that it resulted in part from the emphasis on excluding women, the question as to exactly why no substantial panic over the protection of white women from native sexual predation developed in the Protectorate is currently unanswerable. Such concerns certainly manifested in other colonial fields, and often, as Inglis (1974) demonstrates, in striking ways. Laracy and Laracy (1980) have suggested that there was indeed agitation from the planter community during the 1930s, but my own research has certainly indicated an administrative reluctance to engage in similar. Perhaps, like the lack of miscegenation discourse, this is another case of the archive simply not substantiating what we have been taught to expect. Archival silences can be telling, yet it is difficult to know exactly what is to be told here.

Even though male traffic to the colonies was in some part spurred by a desire to escape feminine bounds for a more masculine world (Chari 2001, Tosh 2005) domestic care had to be somehow provided since cooking and housekeeping negated rather than affirmed masculinity. Through the Victorian period, metropolitan women had increasingly come to stand for domesticity (Tosh 2005), and, certainly, the white bachelor was marked by an absence of the feminine. This had ambivalent connotations. In 1917 the bachelors' quarters, shared by a

number of officers, were described as dilapidated and poorly furnished (48/18). When Hutson visited the Protectorate in 1925, he concocted a plan to appoint a matron to look after the quarters. By implication this meant the bachelors living in them, with her role envisaged as including taking charge of cooking meals since the officers, evidently unable to cook for themselves, were otherwise reliant upon Tulagi's Chinese restaurant (2361/25). By this arrangement one woman could serve several men, be entirely dedicated to their household needs, and completely under the control of the government which employed her.

If the administration would not support heterosexual marriage or the subsequent importation of wife and family to the Solomons, single men were condemned to domestic slovenliness or forced to make alternative arrangements.

Looking at turn-of-the-century Australia, McGrath (2005) notes that Queensland had a significant gender imbalance, which in consequence led to a great demand from white men for partnerships with Aboriginal women. Despite offering colonialist men domestic benefits, these relationships were frowned upon, and from 1901 Queensland legislated against them. Likewise, in the Solomons relationships between colonial men and native women were officially disapproved of, especially for government officers. Around 1908, District Officer T.W. Edge-Partington came under government scrutiny for his relationship with a native woman (836/08). It appears that this relationship was viewed as such gross misconduct that it was only by announcing his engagement to a more suitable candidate – a white woman living in Sydney – that he was able to save his job. Edge-Partington was by no means the only white man in the Solomons to engage in a liaison with a native woman. However, his status as a



government officer singled him out for particular attention since he had to retain imperial prestige.

This seems to fit with concerns about inter-racial sexual liaisons and miscegenation in other colonial contexts (e.g., Stoler 1995). However, archival evidence does not show these concerns to be very strong in the Protectorate. In the 1919 debate on the institution of native marriage legislation the administration chose to ignore Goldie's suggestion that consideration be made of interracial unions in the regulation. Roger Greene noted simply:

It has not been considered wise to give effect to the recommendation of the Reverend Mr Goldie that the draft should be made to apply to native women who desire to become the wives of white men (229/19).

Not only does this statement – the be-all and end-all of recorded discussion on the matter – locate aspirations for marriage in the female partner (the subtext being that no white man would seriously want to enter into such a marriage of his own accord), it assumes that, in the absence of legislative treatment, the issue would not arise. The Edge-Partington affair is the only instance in the archive of a relationship being *recorded* between a government officer and a native woman.<sup>7</sup> Given the emphasis on the sexual enactment of masculinity identified by Levine (2003), whether or not the numerous single men who served for lengthy periods in the Protectorate remained celibate throughout is an intriguing speculation. It seems rather more likely that Edge-Partington was caught out by either an inability or a refusal to keep the liaison out of explicit official purview.

Paid servants were also available to care for domestic concerns. Notably, evidenced by the archive and the accounts of Collinson (1926) and MacQuarrie (1946), native houseboys were the most common choice. In these cases, the 'boy' label seems generally accurate, with

servants such as Gange (Conclusion) and Collinson's Vorni, around 13-15 years old. Boutilier (1984) suggests that houseboys were common since European wives feared their husbands might stray were native women allowed into the house. However, houseboys were also the norm for single men, and as my discussion of the Gange case below demonstrates, could also be desired. Additionally, I would speculate that, after decades of male plantation labour, the notion of men going away to work was normalised among native populations. While physical chastisement was employed (107/12, Collinson 1926), the relationships between white men and native houseboys could be jocular and affectionate. Collinson was so attached to Vorni that he took him on holiday to Australia where he delighted in showing him off. He recounts many amusing incidents which, while highlighting the racial demarcation, nevertheless give a strong sense of a very real affection.

While homosociality encouraged the development of a certain degree of closeness between officers and native men, it had its limits. One of these was the stricture to not get *too* close. The risk of a government officer going over to the native side was nowhere more palpable than in the case of Jack Barley. He was conversant with a number of native dialogues, lived in a house of native construction and was, by all accounts, the most skilled and capable of all the officers.<sup>8</sup> But his many capabilities were shadowed by the fear that his concern for native welfare could easily fall into over-concern. In 1928, Hutson noted that Barley was 'inclined to become on too intimate terms with natives, and thereby to lose the respect of both natives and Europeans' (3 II 83/28). In 1930, Ashley described Barley as:

pro-native which is not a bad thing so long as he remains  
pro-Government first ... In my opinion he has been too

many years in the Pacific and he will run to seed if left here  
(3 II 25/30).

Native intimacy threatened to throw him into degeneracy, removing his white privilege (Eves 1999, Stoler 1995).

For at least a decade, higher officials raised concerns regarding Barley's native intimacy and suggested transferring him out of the Solomons, if not out of the Pacific altogether. Yet they did not transfer him. Filose, on the other hand, was promptly expelled from the Protectorate, in fact from the entire colonial service. The difference was exactly the one Barley himself outlined (quoted above) – Filose's attitude towards natives was profoundly negative, his was not. Barley enacted homosociality, and his position endowed him with skills and abilities useful to the government. Even though there were fears he might turn away from the government and towards natives, as long as his loyalty was retained those abilities were too great to lose. Filose was not guilty of too much homosociality, but of too little, or, rather, too little of the officially endorsed version. Where Barley seemingly attracted native respect, Filose was so antagonistic he went in fear of his life (1064/33).

While Filose's *loia cane* invokes the powers of discipline as it is wielded upon the native, the neurasthenia from which he suffered creates dissolution as it invades the person of the white man. The punishment of the native is to be brought under control; the punishment of the white man is to be removed from control. The idea of men going over the edge connects to elaborations of discipline and the male body. But there is also a certain ecstasy in this dissolution. As he was himself tortured, Filose nevertheless indulged in the eroticism of administering lashes to male buttocks. His participation in these acts was usually as a voyeuristic bystander. In the nineteen criminal charges on which he appeared before the court in 1933 (584/33), he actively committed only

three himself, commanding a native constable under his charge to commit the remaining sixteen while he looked on.

The administration of punishment to naked native men appears as a product of a pornographic colonialist gaze. This had gone well beyond the exhortation to look at the body of Liliboi in order to confirm his status as a fine specimen of manhood. Paradoxically, the gaze most explicitly spoken of denied its homoeroticism, and yet the gaze that most denied its homoeroticism was the most manifestly pornographic. In the next chapter, I interrogate the place of homoeroticism in Protectorate homosociality.

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Tried in Sydney (he had fled the Protectorate and enlisted in the Australian army), Glasson received the support of local journalists and was eventually acquitted.

<sup>2</sup> This may not be such a glaring discrepancy from Luxton's account. According to the government version, the shot did not immediately kill Liliboi and he was finished off with an axe blow.

<sup>3</sup> Note the change from the horrified lament regarding 'poor Howie's head' during the outrages (Chapter Two), to the jocular rendering of Liliboi's head on a spear.

<sup>4</sup> When the Resident Commissioner was on leave, or for other contingent reasons unable to act in the post, a capable District Officer (usually Barley) was appointed to act in his place.

<sup>5</sup> Most D.O.s had vessels in which to tour their districts, as each encompassed a number of islands.

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Rodman (2001) provides a sustained historical ethnographic analysis of colonial housing in the New Hebrides condominium during approximately the same period covered by this work. Our concerns are markedly different, but her work provides a crucial elaboration of the relationships between space, domesticity, and the interplay of power, the personal and intimacy in a colonial society in many ways much like this one.

<sup>7</sup> Bennett mentions in a footnote that Barley 'was well-known for his involvements with Island women by whom he fathered several children' (1987:441n57). Her archival references however refer solely to Edge-Partington, indicating this was a conclusion drawn from informants.

<sup>8</sup> Barley was eventually awarded the recognition of being titled 'First District Officer' and went on to become Resident Commissioner in the Gilbert & Ellice Island Colony.

## Conclusion

### **‘My Friend, the Best and Finest I Have Ever Had’** *Homosociality to Homoeroticism*

Vouza was a magnificent specimen of humanity ... His build had the grand simplicity of perfection ... which marks the work of the great Greek sculptors when they re-created manly youth in all its warmth and beauty. He wore very little, merely the khaki *lava-lava* ... wrapped tightly around his narrow hips

- Hector MacQuarrie (1946:28-29)

Frederick Ernest Gilbert stands convicted before this Court for that he ... on divers dates between the 5<sup>th</sup> day of April 1917 and the 17<sup>th</sup> day of July 1917 within the British Solomon Islands Protectorate ... upon one Hohinilahu feloniously did make an assault, and then feloniously, wickedly, and against the order of nature had a venereal affair with the said Hohinilahu, and then feloniously carnally knew him the said Hohinilahu, and feloniously, wickedly, and against the order of nature with the said Hohinilahu did commit and perpetrate that detestable and abominable crime of buggery

- Court proceeding held by Judicial Commissioner I.G.  
Bates, July 31<sup>st</sup> 1917 (2831/17)

Frederick Ernest Gilbert makes his archival appearance in the brief report of his trial and sentencing before the Tulagi court in 1917. Gilbert was sentenced to six years’ penal servitude for his ‘unnatural crimes’. Most likely he was deported from the Protectorate to serve this – at the time, there were no facilities deemed suitable for the long-term incarceration of a European. From the record, it appears that Gilbert assaulted Hohinilahu, forcing him into providing sexual service. Of course, the actual circumstances are unknown, since neither Gilbert nor Hohinilahu have a voice in this archival fragment, its repetitions of words like ‘wicked’ and ‘felonious’ leaving no doubt as to what the judicial line on such behaviour was. Gilbert appears in a footnote to

Bennett's history of the Solomons where she claims he was brought to justice 'on his own insistence' (1987:441n.56). This seems an unusual thing for a man to do in a judicial climate he undoubtedly knew would ensure his own strictly enforced imprisonment. Perhaps he did so in a fit of penitence for his carnal sins, but, the actual source of Bennett's assertion is unclear.

By contrast, it is not difficult to find information about Hector MacQuarrie, the impassioned former D.O. prominent in Chapter Three,. The archive preserves his frequent, often manic, letters to the colonial authorities (and their reactions). He was himself a published author, with half a dozen books to his name, including *Vouza and the Solomon Islands*, his 1946 account of his experiences twenty years earlier, and an ode to his beloved native Lance-Corporal – 'my friend, the best and finest I have ever had' (1946:218).

In the preceding chapters I have identified and depicted homosociality as the core colonial mode in the Solomons. Cast over this, however, is the question of how non-erotic such a comradely relationship really was. Drawing upon Sedgwick, Arondekar argues that 'male homosociality sustains and extends the mythology of empire through a *precarious evacuation* of its homoerotic content' (2003:68, my emphasis). By doing so, she effectively leaves colonial homosociality laced with the potential resurfacing of a displaced erotic.

Fleetingly referring to homoeroticism in the Protectorate, Keesing and Corris (1980) quote an appreciative colonialist description of a native man – the MacQuarrie description of Vouza with which I preface this chapter. Arriving at such a point in this, my concluding chapter, I directly address the theme of the colonial queer in the Protectorate's masculine 'world in miniature'. My intent is not to demonstrate that colonialists in the Solomons were latent homosexuals and/or acting out

Freudian fantasies, but to interrogate the measures by which homosociality was constructed. Consequently, my thoughts and observations are here offered in a spirit of critical engagement with the terrain of homosociality and the question of the erotic within it. Doing so, I moreover return to anthropology, and the discipline's own queer turn. What follows is not so much a precise and concrete conclusion as a parting locus of curiosity.

Over the sixty years I have examined, the British Solomon Islands Protectorate undertook colonial administration through homosociality. The colonial officers who fashioned and upheld this mode did so from an engagement with imperial constructions of hegemonic white masculinity and from a foundational violent masculine confrontation.

Some of the first official agents of empire to engage discursively with the Solomon Islands and their native inhabitants were the captains of the Australian Naval Station. For these men, seasonally sent to investigate native infractions against Europeans throughout the Western Pacific, the Solomons were at the apex of savagery, populated by treacherous cannibalistic head-hunters. Their encounters with natives were marked by violence and they were encounters with native *men* specifically. During the outrage period a mythology developed which the later Protectorate could draw upon in representations of native men. Violent contact, not rivalry over women (Sedgwick 1985), was the initiating point for Protectorate homosociality.

As administrative control grew, homosociality coalesced, becoming the primary configuration of colonial governance in the Solomons. White men surveyed, interrogated and administered native men. The bureaucratic judicial system solidified into a potent means for examining the criminalised native, pronouncing his beliefs and lifeways.

Motive, purportedly read in native terms, was actually read in European terms.

Developing, and then persistently tweaking, a regulation on native adultery, the administration annexed a moral territory from the missions and proceeded to enact its own homosocial conceptualisations upon it. Identified as the trouble-making instigators of adultery, native women were scorned and marginalised. Even though the administration agreed upon their guilt, it refused to engage with them and primarily punished native men for the offence.

European women were also excluded. Indeed, by the 1920s, only single men were being appointed to the Protectorate due to concerns that married men would bring their wives. The European women who *were* in the Solomons were as far as possible ignored. When they did appear in administrative records, such as ‘nuisance to female’ legislation, they were accused of inviting the offence; scorned in similar ways to native women. The Protectorate was a man’s world; it was homosocial.

Homosociality was the marked result of what was an essentially male colonial endeavour. Inhabiting an outpost of empire, white men interacted with possibilities unavailable in the metropole, generating homosociality as a specific formation with a particular tropology, and delineations of what was and what was not acceptable behaviour.

In introducing my project, I referenced Richard Burton’s observation of men and men meeting in the desert. Burton, best known for his translations of *The Arabian Nights*, saw himself as a radical transgressor, countering the frigid ‘Mrs Grundyism’ of Victorian England with oriental eroticism (Kennedy 2000). Scholars predominantly read him in this incarnation, particularly due to the



conclusion of his translated edition – the infamous ‘Terminal Essay’ (2002 [1886]), a fascinating exercise in sexualised colonial ethnology in which he argued that conditions of climate in a thick longitudinal band of the globe (missing Britain but plastered across the bulk of the empire) produced endemic male homoeroticism. Burton clearly imagined men and men to be doing much more than just *meeting* in the desert!

The Sotadic Zone was geographically opposed to Britain so that male homoeroticism stood as a contrast with Britishness and hegemonic masculinity. In Burton’s estimation, the British male could be corrupted into ‘*le vice*’ (homoeroticism) by prolonged residence in exotic climes, but, unlike native inhabitants, had no *natural* predilection. Burton’s geographical delineation fundamentally constituted an argument that climate produced sexual vice. Elsewhere, it was acknowledged that the tropics exerted debilitating ravages upon the European male body, even leading to the diagnosis of tropical neurasthenia (Anderson 1997). Francis Filose (Chapter Five) was the Protectorate’s archetypal tropical neurastheniac. He claimed that the Solomons had affected his health to such an extent that he was no longer in charge of his own actions. But they were hardly erratic. Again and again exactly the same thing happened. Brought up in almost twenty charges, as well as numerous anecdotal incidents that were never brought to court (1064/33), these incidents begin to look decidedly calculated.

Anderson (1997) explains that as time went on tropical neurasthenia became increasingly connected to sexual immorality. By the 1920s the condition had become pathologised, and furthermore, connected to sexual over-indulgence. Rather than evoking sympathy, Tropical neurasthenia came to symbolise shame, a colonial ‘dirty secret’.

The notion of Filose’s inability to enact officially endorsed homosociality becomes further intriguing when his floggings proper are

examined. These were imbued with violent homoeroticism. Male victims were first ordered to strip naked before undergoing the punishment. Filose then focussed almost fetishistically on the buttocks, to which strokes were administered with a strap, loa cane, or broomstick.

Routing his analysis of the male body initially through Sedgwick's triangulation, Philip Culbertson writes that homosociality:

can be maintained only when men avert their gaze from each other; the gaze, however figuratively, must remain focused on a woman. When the male gaze turns towards another man, homosociality threatens to disintegrate into homoeroticism (1998:n.p.).

Culbertson's point is a pertinent reminder that colonial masculinity viewed heterosexuality as normative. The same administration that excluded women and privileged men maintained an expectation that explicit desire would nevertheless be heterosexual. Randall Halle writes of heterosexuality

not simply as object choice but as the route through which desire may be associated with something other than desire: universal rationality, morality, national community, bourgeois subjectivity, freedom, and equality .... the positive direction of desire (2004:13).

Heterosexuality's incontrovertible status emerges as hegemonic effect, existing not just for some but imperative for all, and thereby vigorously, and often aggressively, defended.

I arrived at a consideration of same-sex relationships unintentionally, from an initial research focus upon miscegenation with its obvious emphasis upon inter-racial heterosexual desire. Indeed, heteronormative assumptions underwrite the ways that Clay (2005), Robert (2001) and Stoler (1995), among many others, have rendered colonial desire. Stoler's engagement with homosexuality in *Race and the*

*Education of Desire* occurs in just one of her 479 footnotes (see also Arondekar 2005). She begins promisingly with her acknowledgement that 'The absent presence of the dangers of homosexuality in these debates is striking', yet concludes disappointingly:

My silence on this issue and the prominent place I give to heterosexuality reflects my long-term and failed efforts to identify any sources that do more than assume or obliquely allude to this "evil" (1995:93).

While appreciating Stoler's acknowledgement of shortcoming, she has ultimately treated homoeroticism as a 'thing', only available for discussion or consideration when it can be connected to explicit acts (see also Wallace 2003). This is a remarkable analytical lack, given her Foucauldian perspective. She does not, for example, require explicit documentary reference to 'race' in order to read its discursive nuances.

For Foucault (1998[1976]), 'the homosexual' was born as a species and a condition, in 1870, moving same-sex desire from being an activity to an identity. Post-Stonewall gay politics has tended to strengthen rather than detract from this. Although now no longer as contentious, scholars in the 1980s were starkly divided into biological essentialist and social constructionist camps over the 'causes' of homosexuality (Weeks 1991). Sedgwick (1985) acknowledged the debate, but rightly dismissed it as quite beside the point, because in homosociality, the erotic remains a potential. It is desire, not thing or identity.

In November 1911 Officer of Police Lester (or Leicester) Keppel was stood down pending an investigation into the alleged rape at gun-point of a fifteen year old houseboy named Gange, on the government station at Auki (107/12). It was distressing to more than himself – Keppel, strenuously denying the accusations, claimed that Edge-Partington 'was so overcome that he wept ... and said "I know Keppel, its impossible"'

(107/12). Keppel expressed a fear that the accusation would stick, even if he was exonerated. He announced that he felt compelled to break off his upcoming nuptials, and begged that word not get back to his family.

In December he notified Woodford:

as it will be some months before the High Commissioner's decision [on the case] reaches me, and when it does, in the event of his re-instating me, I fear I should have to resign as I do not think your present sentiments to me ... would permit of my going ahead much [in the colonial service] (107/12).

He had been in the post with the police less than a year. News of the case provoked Woodford to a dramatic about-face in a private and confidential letter to the High Commissioner:

I [previously] wrote in high terms of the opinion I had formed of [Keppel] ... I regret to inform you that all the high expectations which I had formed ... have been disappointed (107/12).

Criminal charges were not pursued against Keppel; rather, his resignation was accepted, and when he announced an intention to leave for Sydney, the government willingly paid his passage.

Correspondence on the case is marked by repeated references to Keppel's whip and revolver. Like Filose's floggings, homoeroticism was here marked by violence. Bataille (1986, 1989 [1961]) inextricably links violence and desire, viewing their association as a continuing theme in human history. For example, an Upper Paleolithic painting in the Lascaux cave depicts:

a man with a bird's face, who asserts his being with an erect penis, but who is falling down. This man is lying in front of a wounded bison. The bison is about to die, but, facing the man, it spills its entrails horrifically (1989:35).

For Bataille, both the enigma and the lesson of the Lascaux image is that, even in the face of death, the erotic experience is undeniably bodily expressed.

In re-working Sedgwick's (1985) model of homosociality, I have argued that it was masculine violence, not rivalry over women, that initiated homosociality in the Solomons. Bataille's reading of violence and desire is productive to place against this. I do not suggest that the outrages were somehow fundamentally erotic, but his outlook gives an interesting explanation as to why homosociality might burst into open homoeroticism through violence. The most erotic acts upon native male bodies admitted to the archive – the Filose floggings and the rapes purportedly committed by Keppel and Gilbert – were wholly violent. I suggest that, originating in violence, homosociality ruptured into explicit homoeroticism through the same medium.

Lingering gazes upon Liliboi and Vouza, however appreciative, did not rupture into corporeality.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, eroticism was supposed to remain suppressed in homosociality. The thought of a white man's lust for a native man surging into sexual intensity was monstrous, as the litany of appalled adjectives in the judgment against Gilbert indicates. When such avoidances are brought into the light they are unsettling and fundamentally threatening. The need then becomes one of shutting them down, showing them to be isolated monstrosities rather than just clearly elaborated instances of the always already there. Filose could be expelled from the Protectorate. Gilbert could be imprisoned. Keppel could have his ticket paid. But it did not, indeed could not, expunge the homoerotic shadow from the privileged homosocial relationships the administration engaged in with native men.

Homosociality always retained the potential to be *more than* social. MacQuarrie's book intrigues with the following passage:

Tropical insular life ... sooner or later turns a small community of average, decent, amiable Christians into something vastly different spiritually; and, if current gossip is accepted, it is evident that the direct rays of the sun apparently stimulate physical processes and impulses to an alarming degree, inducing great versatility in mature persons .... Since young native Solomons women exert little, if any, attraction to even the toughest white men, and since there are literally no young, unattached white women about, it may be easily seen what can happen (1946:9).

MacQuarrie did not, I do not think, mean to imply that European men would turn to the comforts of native men. From his next paragraph it seems more evident that he intended it as a disguised barb towards Kane who, MacQuarrie had alleged, was conducting a clandestine affair with Colin Wilson's wife (Chapter Three). But it is difficult, reaching the conclusion of a work that has highlighted the special, privileged and defended status of homosocial relationships between native men and white men to avoid a compelling re-reading.

While the tropical climate of the Solomons ensured its firm place within Burton's Sotadic Zone, his ethnological elaborations discuss homoerotic occurrences everywhere *but* the Pacific (2002).<sup>2</sup> In contrast, the Pacific, and particularly Melanesia, looms large in current anthropological engagements with same-gender sexual practices (Weston 1993). Gilbert Herdt's work on the Sambia in New Guinea has attained a particularly canonical status (Lewin and Leap 2002, Weston 1993). A number of other scholars have followed his lead, and Weston notes that

the corpus of work on male-male relations in Melanesia has supplied scholars in gender studies with the material to challenge the reduction of sexuality to a presocial "fact of nature" (1993:351).

The Melanesia evoked and valued here is one in which indigenous peoples engage in traditionalised sexual practices, the alterity of which allows Western scholars to assess their own politically emergent sexual cultures. Here, Wallace's (2003) contention that Pacific sexualities have been formative of modern Western sexualities certainly does ring true. Perhaps, in this respect, we have not travelled quite so far from Margaret Mead's (1971 [1928]) Samoa.

But the anthropological Melanesia of ritual insemination differs considerably from the Solomon Islands of colonial homosociality that I have examined. Where 'exotic' examples can be mobilised for cross-cultural elaborations on alternative sexual practices, colonialism is not as adaptable to such an ethnographic project. While accounts have referenced the colonial destruction of indigenous sexualities, particularly in the Americas (e.g., Trexler 1995, Williams 1996), there seems to have been far less acknowledgement that colonialism had alternative sexualities too. Calling for more analytical attention in this area, Chari, writing on the British Raj, argues that 'homoerotic colonial fantasies continue to be elusive and contradictory in most commentaries on colonial narrative' (2001:278).

In a wider field, Arondekar (2003, 2005), Sedgwick (1985), Holden (2003), Wallace (2003), and others working particularly in literary analysis have shown themselves adept at re-readings through a queered lens. Their analyses have proceeded from an acknowledgement of the hegemonic imposition of heteronormativity, and a critical desire to fracture it. Whereas Young (1995) portrays colonialism as underwritten by both avowal and disavowal of desire for the racial other, Chari progressing beyond the heteronormative, re-proposes:

colonial power sustained its domination and status by appropriating a contradictory but systematic process of

avowal and disavowal of sexual desire *between men* in the colonies (2001:279, my emphasis).

Analytically foregrounding white masculinity positions it as a creation of power, resulting in lived experiences. Yet as a construction it can be dismembered, opening to interrogation both in its own terms and the alternatives it elided. Fundamentally I agree with Sedgwick (1985), amongst others, that the hegemonic could itself be infused with 'queer' alternatives.

Anthropologists, if Lewin and Leap's (2002) recent edited collection is indicative, have been more cautious, keeping to the (perceived) safety of the explicit. As scholars increasingly faced with vocal criticisms from subjects of study (Scheper-Hughes 2001), it can easily be envisaged that analytical dalliances with the *implicit* homoerotic could generate a veritable minefield. The task becomes a little easier with historical documents as they lend themselves more willingly to the style of discourse analysis undertaken by the literary theorists. Writing from a stance of critical ethnography of colonialism (e.g., Stoler 1995, Taussig 1987, Thomas 1994) also increases the opportunity to address contentious issues. This is, however, no vindication of the rights of the historical anthropologist. No anthropologist can wholly dispense with the vital disciplinary ethic of a duty of care towards informants, living or dead. It would be unforgivably neglectful and uncharitable (not to mention completely inaccurate) to offer up a liberty-taking psychoanalytic re-reading of the archive of the sort made by Mark Forrester (2003), who goes so far as to equate a literary character bathing in the Dead Sea with lathering himself in semen. What I am suggesting, in contradistinction to such (wishful) indulgence, is that historical anthropology – combining ethnographic methodologies with understandings of the past – might



occupy a particular position from which to sally forth into queer terrain. It is a position informed by a critical sensibility directed towards lived experience and social formation. More than the constructed fantasies of canonical novelists, anthropology extends into actual lives, and ultimately that is a ripe opportunity to offer enriched understandings for a discipline that has long prided itself on unsettling comfortable Eurocentrisms.

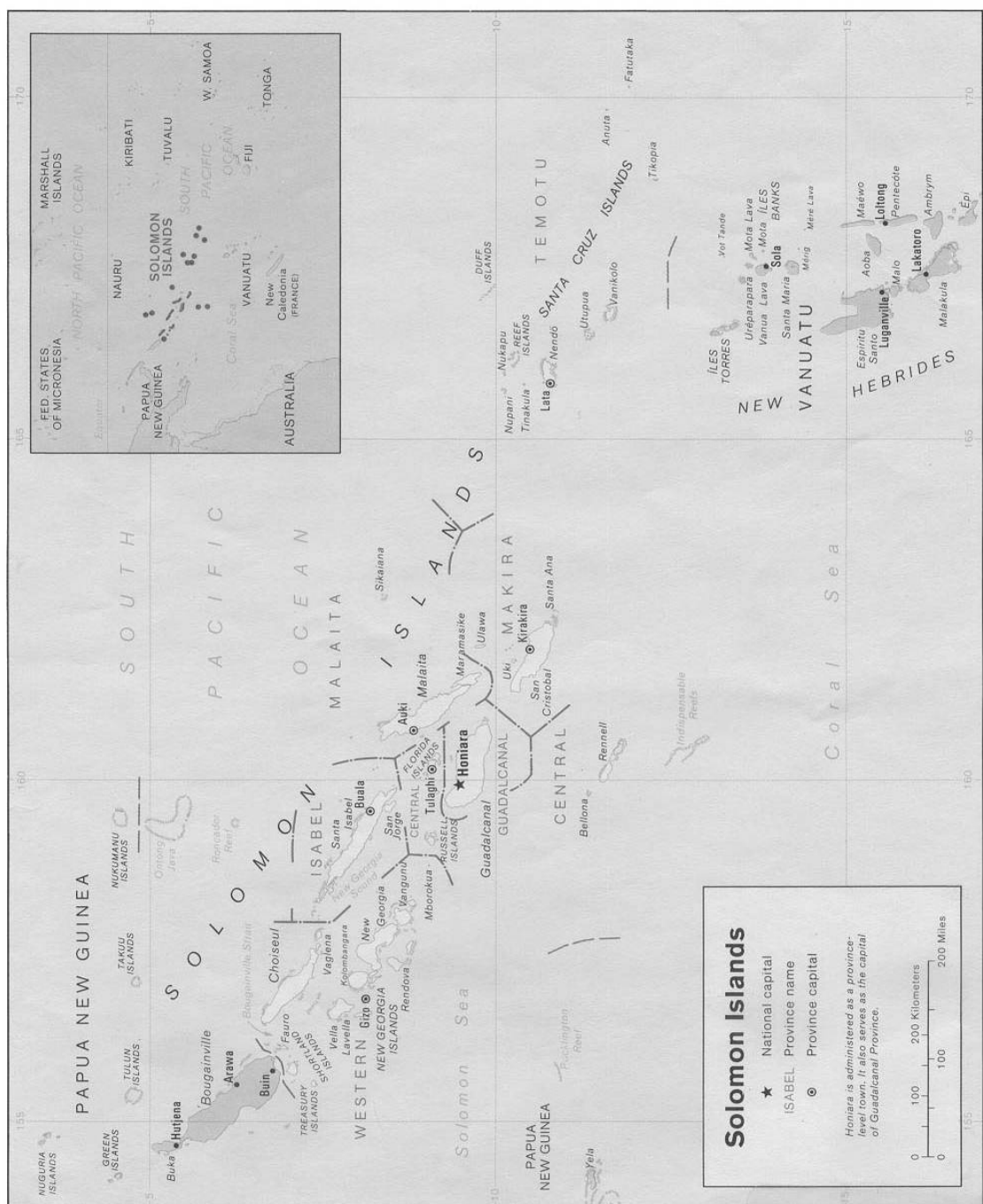
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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Although, after his violent death, the exalted Liliboi's skull was scandalously acquired as a curiosity – a final grasped possession.

<sup>2</sup> Lee Wallace (2003) contends that European encounters with a sensuous Polynesia were significantly formative of metropolitan understandings of homosexuality. Yet, given his stature, I suggest that Burton's disengagement with Pacific ethnology (in favour of extensive elaborations of classical Greece, the Orient and the New World) might undermine her premise to a degree.

## Appendix One: Maps



Modern map of the Solomon Islands c.1989.

Available at [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/australia/solomon\\_islands\\_pol89.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/australia/solomon_islands_pol89.jpg)



## Appendix Two: Cast of Colonialists

The official government employees referenced throughout this work are here listed, with their primary designations and the years (where known) during which they served. Years were derived from Judith Bennett (1987) or Deryck Scarr (1967).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Appointment and Years</b>
Ashley, F.N.	Resident Commissioner, 1929-1939
Barley, J.C.	District Officer, 1912-1933
Barnett, F.J.	Resident Commissioner, 1915-1917
Bates, I.G.	Acting Judicial Commissioner
Bell, W.R.	District Officer, 1915-1927
Brooke	Australian Naval Station
Brownlees, J.K.	District Officer, 1934-1941
Campbell, F.M.	Officer Commanding Constabulary
Clayton, Francis	Australian Naval Station
Davson, Charles	Chief Judicial Commissioner, W.P.H.C.
Dawson	Australian Naval Station
de Heveringham, N.P.	Judicial Commissioner
Edge-Partington, T.W.	District Officer, 1904-1915
Filose, F.B.	District Officer, 1927-1933
Fletcher, Hugh	High Commissioner, W.P.H.C.
Fowler, W.	District Officer, 1929-1935
Greene, Roger	Secretary to the High Commissioner
Hubbard, Percy	Judicial Commissioner
Hutson, Eyre	High Commissioner
Hyne, Ragnar	Judicial Commissioner
Kane, R.R.	Resident Commissioner, 1921-1929
Kelham	Australian Naval Station
Knibbs, Stanley	Government Surveyor
Lillies, K.C.	Cadet, 1925-1927
MacKenzie	Chief Judicial Commissioner, W.P.H.C.
Mahaffy	Assistant to Woodford
Maxwell	Australian Naval Station
Miller, W.H.	District Officer, 1927-1941
Rodwell,	High Commissioner
Sandars, Eustace	District Officer, 1928-1943
Thurston, John	High Commissioner, W.P.H.C., 1888-1897
Tryon, George	Rear-Admiral, Australian Naval Station
Turner, James	Medical Officer
Usborne-Moore	Australian Naval Station
Vaskess	Chief Judicial Commissioner, W.P.H.C.

Wilson, Colin E.J.	District Officer, 1915-1943
Woodford, C.M.	Resident Commissioner, 1896-1915
Workman, C.R.M.	Resident Commissioner, 1917-1921
Wright, L.W.S.	District Officer, 1928-1941

## Appendix Three: Timeline of the Solomon Islands

General economic and contextual events, derived from Judith Bennett (1987).

1568	First arrival of Mendaña's Spanish fleet.
1595	Mendaña returns. Disastrous second Spanish expedition lost, along with longitudinal coordinates.
1768	Islands 'rediscovered' by Bougainville
c.1800-1860	European whalers operate in the Islands.
c.1860-1900	Whaling declines, replaced by itinerant European traders.
1869	Beginning of labour trade to Fiji and Queensland.
1877	Pacific Order in Council gives W.P.H.C. authority over British subjects in the Solomons.
1893	First declaration of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate.
1896	Arrival of Woodford as first Resident Commissioner.
1900	First legislation in service of land alienation.
1904-1908	Repatriation of labourers expelled from Queensland by the 'White Australia' policy.
1905-1913	Extensive copra plantation development.
1909	Demand for indentured labour begins to outstrip supply. 'Labour crisis'.
1914	Foundation of Solomon Islands Planters' Association. First Judicial Commissioner. Dysentery epidemic on plantations, overall 5% death rate.
1922	Government regulation and inspection of labour firmly established. Copra price slump .
1924	'Nuisance to female' legislation.
1927	'Malaita Massacre' – two government officers and a group of native entourage killed whilst enforcing tax collection.
1929	Copra price slump.
1930s	Depression era.
1935	Improvement in copra price.
1937	Copra price slump.
1942	Japanese invasion.

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Great Britain. High Commission for Western Pacific Islands. Western Pacific archives, 1877-1978.

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University of Auckland Library.

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R.569. *South Sea Massacres*.

R.571. *Report of Proceedings Since 5th Of October 1888*.

R.574, 28/86. Rear Admiral Tryon. *Murder of Mr Child at Baggabagga Island - Solomons - Report by Capt Clayton*.

R.574, 43/86. *Elibank Castle Massacre - Benyetta Solomon Group*.

R.575, 103/86. Rear Admiral Tryon. *Attack on the "Young Dick" at Malayta on the 2nd May 1886*.

R.575, 107/86. Rear Admiral Tryon. *Murder of Mr Child at Baggabagga Solomons: Further Concerning*.

R.576. Australian Station. *New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Correspondence Respecting Outrages by Natives on British Subjects during the year 1885*.

R.581. Australian Station. *New Guinea and the Solomon Islands 1889. Correspondence Respecting Outrages by Natives on British Subjects, and other matters, which have been under inquiry during the year 1889, being continuation of reports of cases dealt with in former years, together with other cases that have since arisen*.

R.582, 354/90. Rear Admiral Lord Chas. Scott. *Mr. Tom Dabelle's Murder: further concerning*.

R.601, 342/98. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Case of murder at Hairua on the island of Ulawa*.

R.629, 836/08. Asst. to the High Commr. *Report on conduct of Mr. Edge-Partington*.

R.652. *Mr. L.W. Keppell*.

### *Archive Folders:*

NB: Listings are ordered by collections W.P.H.C. 3, 4 and 8, and in chronological order by collection.

W.P.H.C. 3

II 140/20. High Commissioner. *Mr. Workman. Resignation of*.

II 20/23. The High Commissioner. *Forwards confidential reports on officers in the W.P.H.C.*

- II 108/27. The Acting High Commissioner. *Confidential reports on officers – asks for.*
- II 10/28. The Acting High Commissioner. *Confidential Reports on Officers British Solomons – forwards 8.*
- II 83/28. R.C., B.S.I.P. *Fds Confidential reports on officers in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate.*
- II 9/30. The Resident Commissioner, Solomon Islands. *Confidential Reports on the heads of Departments in the Solomon Islands.*
- II 25/30. The Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands Protectorate. *Confidential Reports on Officers in the BSIP Service for 1930.*

#### W.P.H.C. 4

- 626/17. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Refers to his leave, and expresses the hope that some special concession may be made in his favour by way of a larger leave, and at a more convenient time of year.*
- 1551/17. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Forwards copy of report by the Commandant of Constabulary giving a general outline of a policy which could be adopted as a basis of the draft of the proposed circular for the guidance of the Officers of the Protectorate in their dealings with Natives.*
- 2831/17. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Transmits certified copy of the Conviction and sentence of The Court in the matter of a charge against Frederick Ernest Gilbert.*
- 48/18. *Reports on the present system of housing accommodation of Government Officers on Tulagi.*
- 57/18. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Appends reports missing from his previous letter, and reports on his visit to Reef Islands, Santa Cruz, 1918.*
- 1437/18. Messrs Burns, Philp & Co., Sydney. *Forwards newspaper cuttings regarding the Glasson case.*
- 2040/18. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Forwards copies of the record of the trial of a Malaita native, Afukona, for murder, and recommends that the death sentence be commuted to a long term of imprisonment.*
- 214/19. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Draft Regulation for Payment of Native Labour.*
- 218/19. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Choiseul Island, B.S.I.P : - Policy to be pursued with regard to.*
- 228/19. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Draft Native Affairs Regulation 1919.*
- 229/19. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Draft Native Marriages Regulation.*
- 233/19. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Asks that John Mamuli of Santa Cruz may be detained at Tulagi on the ground of public policy.*
- 2902/20. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Suggestions by various Planters on the Solomon Islands Draft Labour Regulation.*



- 1209/21. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Sanitation at Tulagi and the task of reclaiming the swamp known as Chinatown.*
- 1262/21. His Honour, The Chief Judicial Commissioner. *Report and notes of Evidence on trial and conviction of Kora'ai, Basiraro, Loria, Kionia and Lahu'asi in the Solomon Islands Protectorate on a charge of Murder.*
- 1328/21. General Manager, Methodist Missionary Society of Australia. *Forwards information with regard to certain matters connected with the Administration of the Government of the British Solomon Islands.*
- 1351/22. The Commandant, Armed Constabulary, British Solomon Islands. *Rex v Maxwell - Manslaughter case. Reports on the alleged ill-treatment of the accused during the period he was in the custody of the Police.*
- 48/23. H.E. The Governor. *Relations of Solomon Island Administration with H.C. Office and Local European Community.*
- 190/23. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Adultery amongst natives, B.S.I.P.: - suggested legislation against.*
- 643/23. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Asks to be supplied with an instrument for inflicting corporal punishment.*
- 644/23. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Proposed Regulation to provide for the infliction of the punishment of Whipping or Flogging in certain cases.*
- 2405/23. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Administration on the Island of Choiseul.*
- 859/24. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Annual Report of the Prisons Department for 1923.*
- 1823/24. Acting Secretary Western Pacific High Commission. *Selection of suitable candidates for appointment as Gaoler, Tulagi, British Solomon Islands Protectorate.*
- 1824/24. Acting Secretary Western Pacific High Commission. *Selection of suitable candidates for appointment as storekeeper, Tulagi, BSIP.*
- 1182/25. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Police v. Ito (a Japanese trader of Santa Cruz): Forwards for revision of sentence, copies of notes of evidence.*
- 1689/25. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Forwards Confidential communication from Acting D.O. Santa Cruz – MacQuarrie.*
- 1804/25. His Lordship, the Bishop of Melanesia. *Forwards copies of correspondence exchanged with the Resident Commissioner, B.S.I.P., regarding the legality of native marriages.*
- 2325/25. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Rex v. Niola & Mobe (Murder): Forwards Despositions in re..*
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- 2361/25. His Excellency, The High Commissioner for Western Pacific. *Report on visit to the British Solomon Islands Protectorate.*

- 2859/25. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Conduct of Captain H. MacQuarrie whilst acting as District Officer, Santa Cruz.*
- 661/26. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Return of Corporal Punishment inflicted during 1925.*
- 1153/26. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Suggested Amendment of the Native Adultery Punishment Regulation No.7 of 1924.*
- 720/27. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Murder charge: Rex v. Apuilaro, Baibai & Lauia.*
- 1160/27. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Rex v Nanaubatu: Murder. Minutes of Evidence adduced at the Trial.*
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- 3423/27. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Cameron, J.L.R.A., Murder of, Manning Straits, B.S.I.P.*
- 608/30. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *EABO: - Forwards minutes of trial of, charged with murder.*
- 1704/30. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Teri: - Forwards minutes of evidence relative to case of, charged with murder.*
- 2597/31. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Adultery in the B.S.I.P: - Question of adequacy of penalty for, in view of native opinion in Malaita.*
- 3683/31. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Bennett, E., Female convict No. M.970 - Case of.*
- 237/32. Resident Commissioner, British Solomon Islands. *Confidential Reports on Officers of the B.S.I.P. Service for 1931.*
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- 584/33. Ag. Resident Commissioner, B.S.I.P. *Filose, F.B., District Officer, B.S.I.P. :- (i) Minutes of evidence of charges of assault against. (ii) Leave of. (iii) Retirement of, on reduced pension.*
- 610/33. Ag. Resident Commissioner, B.S.I.P. *Court Case, Johnson v. Longava, held by Mr. Deputy Commissioner Filose while administering Ysabel District, B.S.I.P.: - Method of conduct of, and imposition of sentence by.*
- 614/33. High Commissioner, W.P.H.C. *Medical Students from the British Solomon Islands Protectorate for General Medical Sch. Suva. Selection and Preliminary education of.*
- 1064/33. Ag. Resident Commissioner, B.S.I.P. *Filose, F.B., B.S.I.P: - Petition from certain Europeans and Native Residents of Ysabel Island for the reinstatement of.*

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